SHONENJUMP MANGA

vol. 21

NISEKOI

False Love

Story and Art by
NAOSHI KOMI

Lately coffee has been upsetting my stomach, so I've switched to tea instead. Turns out, I really love it! When I was a child, I wasn't the least bit interested in the taste or fragrance of tea, but now I'm really enjoying savoring the different flavors. I guess I'm a grown-up now. I was drinking Earl Grey because I like it, but one of my assistants pointed out, "That's actually Darjeeling." Hmm.

Naoshi Komi

NAOSHI KOMI was born in Kochi Prefecture, Japan, on March 28, 1986. His first serialized work in *Weekly Shonen Jump* was the series *Double Arts*. His current series, *Nisekoi*, is serialized in *Weekly Shonen Jump*.

NISEKOI:
False Love
VOLUME 21
SHONEN JUMP Manga Edition

Story and Art by
NAOSHI KOMI

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First published in Japan in 2011
by SHUEISHA Inc., Tokyo.
English translation rights arranged
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Printed in the U.S.A.

Published by VIZ Media, LLC
P.O. Box 77010
San Francisco, CA 94107

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
First printing, May 2017

RATED T FOR TEEN

PARENTAL ADVISORY
NISEKOI: FALSE LOVE is rated T for Teen and is recommended for ages 13 and up. This volume contains realistic and fantasy violence.

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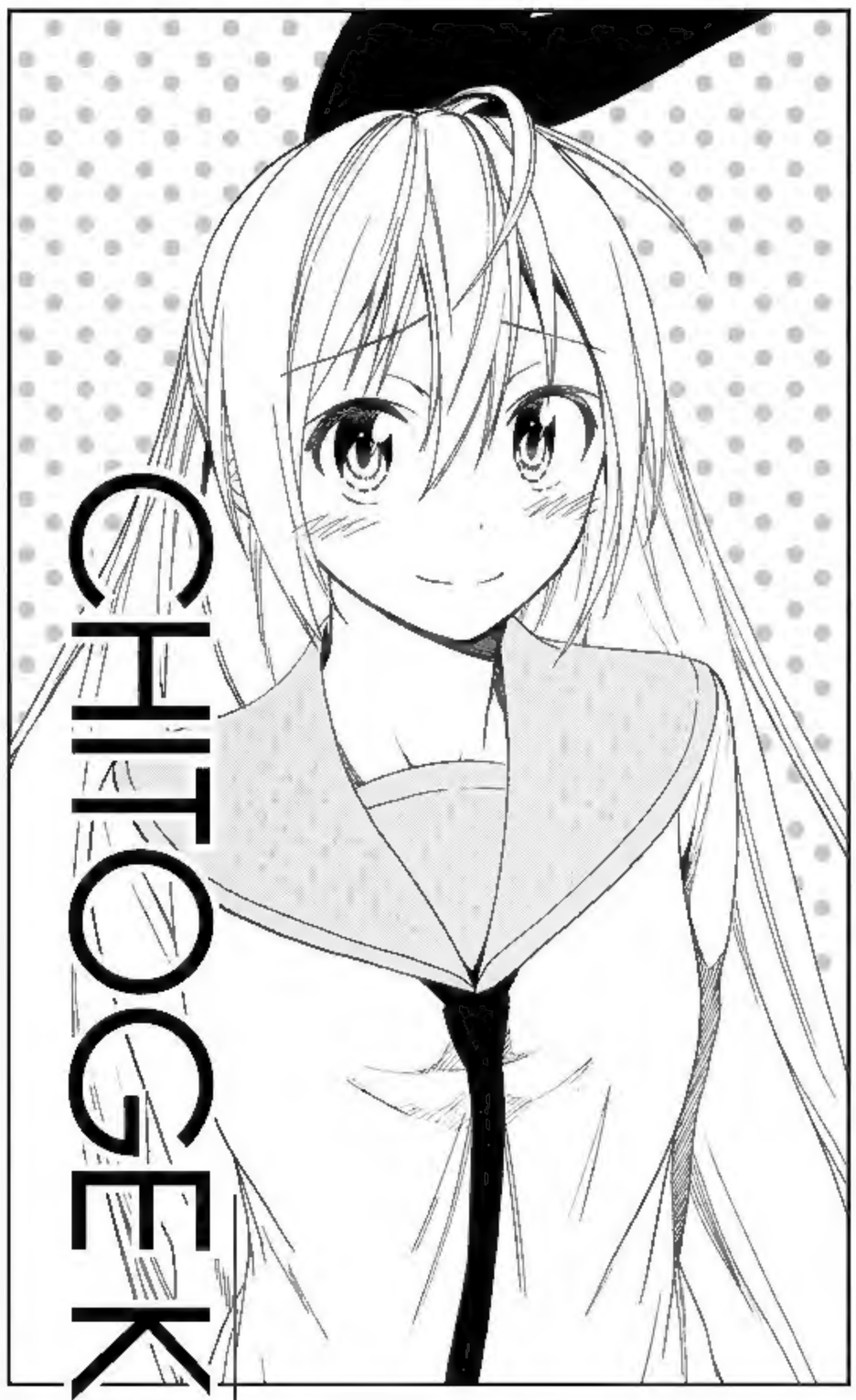
NISEKOI
False Love

vol. 21: To Mari

KOSAKI ONODERA

A girl Raku has a crush on. Beautiful and sweet, Kosaki has no shortage of admirers. She's a terrible cook but makes food that *looks* amazing.



CHITOGE KIRISAKI

A half-Japanese bombshell with stellar athletic abilities. Short-tempered and violent. Comes from a family of gangsters.

SHU MAIKO

Raku's best friend is outgoing and girl-crazy.

RAKU ICHIJO

A normal teen whose family happens to be yakuza. Cherishes a pendant given to him by a girl he met ten years ago.

RURI MIYAMOTO

Kosaki's best gal pal. Comes off as aloof, but is actually a devoted and highly intuitive friend.

YUI KANAKURA

A childhood friend of Raku's, Yui is the head of a Chinese mafia gang and the homeroom teacher of Raku's class at his school. She is currently staying at Raku's house and also has a special key linked to some kind of promise...

MARIKA TACHIBANA

Daughter of the chief of police, Marika is Raku's fiancée, according to an agreement made by their fathers—an agreement Marika takes very seriously! Also has a key and remembers making a promise with Raku ten years ago.

CHARACTERS & STORY

Ten years ago, Raku Ichijo made a promise with a girl he loved that they would get married when they met again...and he still treasures the pendant she gave him to seal their pledge.

Thanks to his family's circumstances, Raku has to pretend he's dating Chitoge Kirisaki, the daughter of a rival gangster. Despite their constant spats, Raku and Chitoge manage to fool everyone. Chitoge also has a token from her first love ten years ago—an old key. Meanwhile, Raku's crush, Kosaki, also has a key, as do Marika, the girl Raku's father has arranged for him to marry, and Yui, a childhood friend who's their homeroom teacher. When Yui's gang pressures her to get married, she confesses her love to Raku. Raku struggles with how to respond, but he finally turns Yui down. As a result, he begins to take a good look at how he really feels...

SEISHIRO TSUGUMI

Trained as an assassin in order to protect Chitoge, Tsugumi is often mistaken for a boy.

HARU ONODERA

Kosaki's adoring younger sister. Has a low opinion of Raku.

NISEKOI
False Love

vol. 21: To Mari

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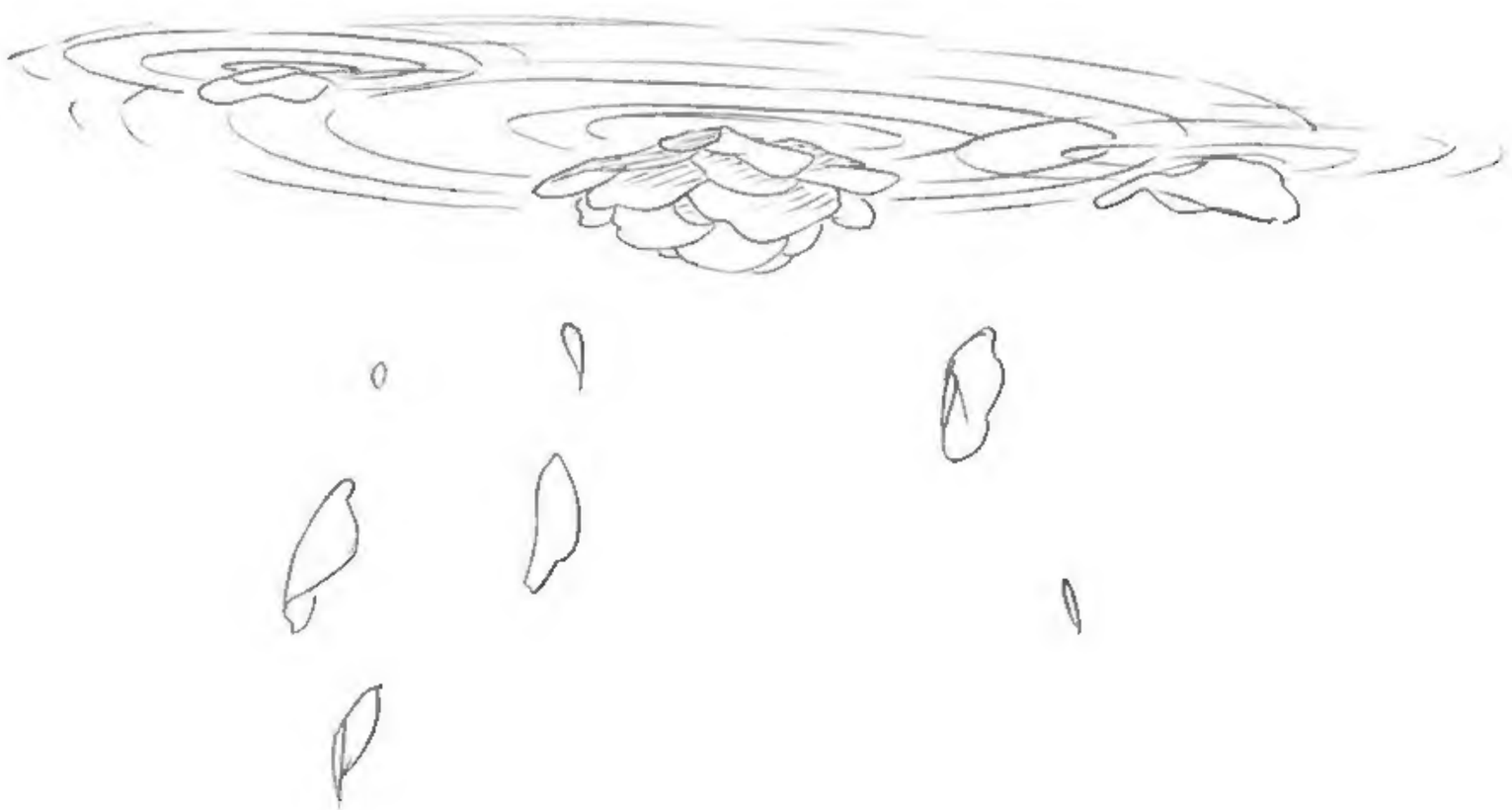


SHFF

milk

GLUB

GLUB

GLUB

HAHH ...

HAHH ...!

HAHH ...

HAHH ...!

HAHH ...

GASP

HAHH ...!

HAHH ...!

HAHH ...

HAHH ...!

HAHH ...!

HAHH ...

...

STUPID BEAN SPROUT!

St Valentinesday

THIS IS FOR YOU...

IT'S CHOCOLATE.

CLEARLY.

OH!

WAIT... WHAT?

USING KOSAKI FOR MORAL SUPPORT WORKED!

HEE HEE! I DID IT!

DON'T WORRY... IT CAME OUT GOOD!

HERE. THIS IS FROM ME.

WHOA!! THANK YOU, ONODERA !!

WELL, DUH. WE'RE DATING, RIGHT?

WOW! FOR REAL?! THIS YEAR TOO?!

WHAT, YOU DON'T WANT IT?

I WANT IT! THANK YOU, CHITOGE!

N-N-NO WAY!! YOU'RE IMAGINING THINGS!!

YOU SEEM WAAAAY MORE EXCITED BY HER CHOCOLATE THAN MINE!!

Grr...

STOKED !!

FOR REAL!? ONODERA GAVE ME CHOCOLATE AGAIN THIS YEAR!!

GLANCE

WHAT'S THIS?

Oyakodon

...?

HUH?

TUNK

SHE REMEMBERED IT WAS VALENTINE'S DAY?!

REALLY?! FROM TSUGUMI TOO?!

Oyakodon

SHE DOES HAVE A SWEET SIDE!

AND SHE EVEN GAVE ME CHOCOLATE!

HMPH!

WHOA!!

BLINK

GASP!

EVER SINCE LAST YEAR, MY LIFE IS SO DIFFERENT...

I KNOW IT'S JUST PLATONIC, BUT I'M STILL SO HAPPY I COULD DIE!

WOW... I DIDN'T EXPECT TO GET THIS MUCH CHOCOLATE AGAIN!!

GLANCE

I WAS JUST WORRIED ABOUT HER...

NO, THAT'S NOT IT!

DON'T BE SUCH A GREEDY STRING BEAN!

WHAT, YOU DIDN'T GET ENOUGH CHOCOLATE?

TACHIBANA'S ABSENT?

YEAH...

SHE'S BEEN ABSENT A LOT LATELY.

IT'S BEEN A MONTH SINCE YUI TOLD ME HOW SHE FELT...

THINGS ARE TOTALLY BACK TO NORMAL BETWEEN US.

I MADE A DECISION...

...ABOUT TACHI-BANA.

THAT I HAVE TO RESPOND TO HER FEELINGS TOO.

...BUT EVENTUALLY EVERYTHING WORKED OUT.

AT FIRST IT WAS A BIT AWKWARD...

PLUS, SHE'S BEEN ABSENT A LOT THESE DAYS...

By the way, I don't want to date you!

Heya, Tachibana!

OUCH!

AND THERE'S REALLY NEVER AN APPROPRIATE TIME...

BUT...THAT MEANS I HAVE TO REJECT HER...

WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT?!

"MISTRESS TACHIBANA DOESN'T HAVE MUCH TIME LEFT."

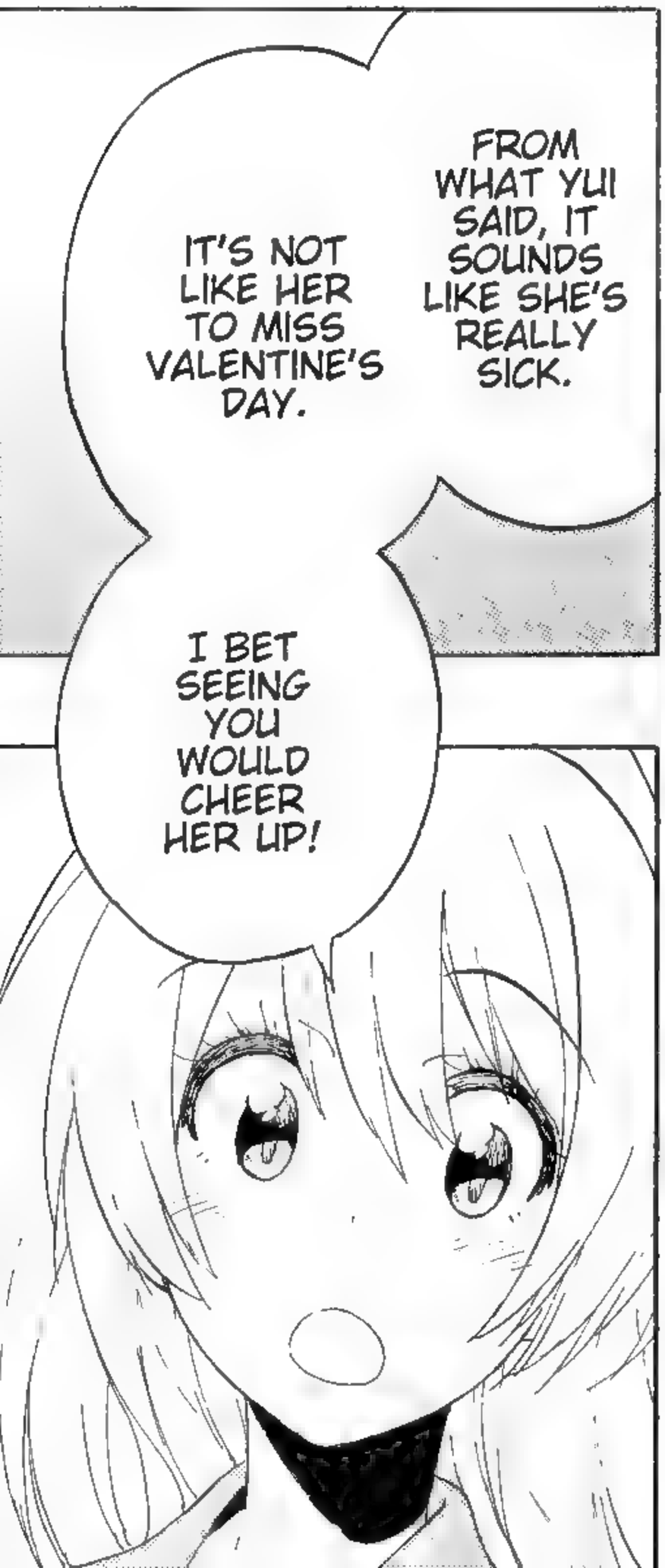
PLUS THAT STUFF HONDA SAID...

AFTER WHAT HAPPENED ON KIRIBATI, I CAN'T HELP WORRYING...

IT'S NOT LIKE HER TO MISS VALENTINE'S DAY.

FROM WHAT YUI SAID, IT SOUNDS LIKE SHE'S REALLY SICK.

I BET SEEING YOU WOULD CHEER HER UP!



YEAH...

I MISS HER TOO!

WE HAVE OUR DIFFERENCES... BUT IT'S WEIRD NOT HAVING HER AROUND.

GEE, CHITOGE, WHAT'S COME OVER YOU?

WHAT? SHUT UP!!

SURE...

OKAY, LET'S DO IT!

I'M SURE SHE'LL BE GLAD TO SEE YOU!

I HAVE TO WORK AT THE SHOP TODAY, BUT GIVE HER MY BEST, OKAY?

RAAAAKU DEEEAREST !!

YEAH... LET'S STOP BY THE SHOPPING ARCADE...

SHOULD WE BRING HER SOMETHING?

TACHIBANA ?!

WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE?

WHEE HEE!

TEE HEE HEE!

SILLY! I WAS WAITING FOR YOU, RAKU DEAREST!! ♡

I FELT BETTER IN THE AFTER-NOON!

BESIDES, TODAY'S A SPECIAL DAY, AND I JUST HAD TO GIVE SOMETHING TO MY DARLING RAKU!!

A SECRET SURPRISE! ♡

RIGHT. CHOCO-LATE.

I THOUGHT YOU WERE SICK.

YOU WEREN'T AT SCHOOL.

IS THAT SO?

WELL, YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE WORRIED! BUT I APPRECIATE THAT!

WE WERE JUST ON OUR WAY TO SEE YOU.

TO CHECK IN...

THERE'S NO PROBLEM.

I'VE BEEN KEEPING UP.

Oh. I See ...

YOU'VE BEEN ABSENT A LOT LATELY. ARE YOU OKAY?

WON'T THEY FAIL YOU AT A CERTAIN POINT?

IF YOU'RE SICK, MAYBE YOU SHOULDN'T ACT SO CRAZY ALL THE TIME.

ALWAYS MESSING WITH MY DARLING... MAYBE YOU NEED TO TAKE IT EASIER.

THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT YOU'D SAY...

WHEN IT COMES TO LOVE, I GO FULL THROTTLE!

THAT'S NOT ME.

REALLY?

IT WAS HER IDEA TO PAY YOU A VISIT.

DON'T BE LIKE THAT, TACHIBANA. CHITOGE WAS WORRIED ABOUT YOU.

HAH! I WAS NOT WORRIED!

YOUR HOUSE IS IN THE OTHER DIRECTION. AND I'M SURE YOU'RE HUNGRY.

SO, DON'T YOU THINK YOU'D RATHER BE MOSEYING ALONG, CHITOGE?

MY HOUSE IS IN THIS DIRECTION, AND I'M NOT HUNGRY, THANK YOU!

I think I'll go now.

Oh, come on now ...

BZZ BZZ

WHY, YOU...!!

WHAT ARE YOU SCHEMING?

Creeeepy!

STARE

?

I SEEM TO HAVE A CALL...

PAR-DON ME...

Chika Tachibana

Decline

BEEP

HUUUH?

WRONG NUMBER!

YOUR MOM?

JUST MY MOM.

IT'S NO BIG DEAL.

WHO WAS THE CALL FROM?

YOU MADE A SUPER-WEIRD FACE JUST NOW!!

WE AREN'T CLOSE.

MY MOM LIVES IN KYUSHU WITH HER PARENTS.

DOES SHE LIVE WITH YOU?

I'VE NEVER MET YOUR MOM...

WHY DID YOU MAKE A FACE?

SHE'S PROBABLY AT LEAST A THOUSAND YEARS OLD.

...WOULD FIT BEST.

"MONSTER"...

She's like a horrible old monster witch.

WHAT'S SHE LIKE?

HMM...

WELL... IF I HAD TO CHOOSE ONE WORD...

IF AT ALL POSSIBLE, I'D RATHER NOT SEE HER.

AND I DON'T THINK SHE'S A GOOD MOTHER EITHER.

SHE'S NOT REALLY A NORMAL PERSON.

SHE'S NOT THAT TYPE.

UNFOR-TUNATELY.

MAYBE YOU JUST HAVE TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO CONNECT...

B-BUT...

IF YOU TRY TALKING WITH HER, YOU MIGHT BE SURPRISED!

I KNOW. I HEARD ABOUT HOW YOU MADE UP WITH YOUR MOM, KIRISAKI.

...

HUH?

WHERE'S YOUR SCHOOL-BAG, KIRISAKI?

I KEEP MEANING TO ASK...

BY THE WAY...

OH, KIRISAKI, YOU CARELESS THING!

AND YOU DIDN'T NOTICE UNTIL NOW?!

WHAT?!

I figured Tsugumi had it or something!

AAAAH!! I LEFT IT AT SCHOOOOL!!

...

NOW...

ISN'T THAT NORMALLY WHAT YOU SAY TO A GUY?

NO. YOU'RE SPECIAL!!

MARIKA, PULL ANY FAST MOVES AND YOU'RE DEAD MEAT!

I'LL BE RIGHT BACK!! WAIT HERE!

I MUST SAY, IT CAME OUT QUITE NICELY!

I HAVE SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR YOU...

RUMMAGE

RUMMAGE

CHOCO-LATE? Why so mysteri-ous?

SHE NOTICED EARLIER AND DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING!

I'M SO GLAD KIRISAKI IS SUCH A DUM-DUM!

ISN'T THIS NICE! JUST THE TWO OF US, RAKU DEAREST!! ♡

HEAVY!!

GLEAM!

TADAAA!

A CHOCOLATE ENGAGE-MENT RING!!

EEK!!

WHEN DID YOU MEASURE MY FINGER?!

I MADE IT TO FIT THE RING FINGER OF YOUR LEFT HAND, RAKU DEAREST! ♡

I'm having one made for me too!

IT'S FABRICATED FROM A SPECIAL KIND OF CHOCOLATE THAT WON'T MELT AT BODY TEMPERATURE, SO YOU CAN ACTUALLY WEAR IT!

GASP!

FOR ONE THING, CHITOGE'S MY GIRLFRIEND...

LISTEN...

...AS A TOKEN OF OUR LOVE...

PLEASE ACCEPT THIS...

I TOLD MYSELF I WOULDN'T USE THAT PHONY EXCUSE ANYMORE!

I HAVE TO GENUINELY TELL HER HOW I FEEL!

WAIT... I'M DOING IT AGAIN!!

THIS IS IT!!

I HAVE TO GIVE HER A REAL ANSWER!!

YOU MEAN THE FACT THAT YOU REALLY HAVE A CRUSH ON ONODERA?

TACHI-BANA!

I HAVE TO SAY IT! I HAVE TO TELL HER I CAN'T LOVE HER BACK...

THE TRUTH IS...

THERE'S SOMETHING I'VE NEVER TOLD YOU.

I PAY PRETTY CLOSE ATTENTION TO YOU, YOU KNOW.

IT DIDN'T ESCAPE MY NOTICE.

NOR DID THE FACT THAT YOU AND CHITOGE AREN'T REALLY DATING!

I'VE BEEN PREPARED FOR THIS.

SHP

ACTUALLY ...

GIVE ME YOUR ANSWER, RAKU DEAREST.

GO AHEAD.

At least she seems to be feeling okay.
Well...
Sheesh...

YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH KIRISAKI...

...AND WHO YOU REALLY CARE FOR, RAKU DEAREST.

I FIGURED IT OUT A LONG TIME AGO.

Chapter 181: Limit

...I KNEW IT WASN'T REALLY VALID.

WHENEVER YOU USED KIRISAKI TO PUSH ME AWAY...

I KNEW. I JUST PRETENDED NOT TO KNOW.

SO... TODAY...

THIS TIME...

...?

THERE I WAS LECTURING OTHER PEOPLE ABOUT BEING TRUE TO THEIR FEELINGS...

I KNOW... IT'S PATHETIC...

I'LL NEVER BETRAY YOU, NO MATTER WHAT...

SO...

PLEASE...

I'LL LOVE YOU FOREVER!

RAKU DEAREST...

CAN'T IT BE ME?

I'LL ALWAYS CHERISH YOU!

NO...

THAT'S NOT TRUE...

SHE'S REALLY GOING FOR BROKE...

TACHIBANA... THE SINCERITY IN HER EYES...

TACHIBANA IS ALWAYS SINCERE.

I ENJOYED BEING AROUND HER.

I ALWAYS JUST CHOSE NOT TO SEE HOW SHE FELT.

I DIDN'T WANT TO LOSE THAT...SO I KEPT AVOIDING THE ISSUE...

AND SHE TRIED SO HARD TO GET MY ATTENTION...

SHE KNEW HOW I FELT...

SO INSENSITIVE.

I'VE BEEN SO INSINCERE IN RETURN.

BECAUSE... SHE'S A REALLY IMPORTANT FRIEND TO ME...

EVEN IF WE CAN'T HANG OUT ANYMORE...

I CAN'T LIE TO HER ANYMORE.

TACHI-BANA...

I...

THAT'S WHY...

TACHI-BANA...?!

...?!

NOT...
NOT NOW...
OH NUTS...
ARE YOU... SICK AGAIN?
HAHH...
HAHH...
WHAT'S WRONG?
KA
YOU OKAY ?!
?!
TACHI-BANA ...?!
WHUD

SHFF

OH MY GOD!! YOU'RE BURNING UP!!

THAT'S NOT HOW IT LOOKS!

I JUST NEED... A LITTLE REST...

I'M OKAY, RAKU DEAREST.

HAHH...

YOU SHOULDN'T PUSH YOURSELF LIKE THIS!!

YOU WEREN'T UP FOR THIS, WERE YOU?

TACHI-BANA REALLY ISN'T WELL!

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

OH! HONDA! I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE HERE!

HAHH...

...

HONDA ...?

W-WHAT SHOULD I DO?!

THIS REALLY... ISN'T GOOD...

SHOULD I CALL AN AMBU-LANCE?

YOU'VE DONE ENOUGH.

NO NEED.

YOU'VE REACHED YOUR LIMIT.

...THIS HAS TO END.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE AUTHORITY ENTRUSTED TO ME BY YOUR MOTHER AS YOUR CARE-TAKER...

!!

NO, HONDA!

I...I STILL...

...?

CARE-TAKER ...?!

...

LET GO OF ME!

STAY AWAY! I'M STILL OKAY!

SHE'D NEVER COOPERATE OTHERWISE.

WHA-?! HONDA... AREN'T YOU GOING A BIT FAR?!

She's sick and all!!

Mfff!!

Mfff!!

FLAIL

FLAIL

KA

FWAP

Ka

KLINK

SHE REALLY IS SICK?

SO...

MEDI-CINE?

!!

EXCUSE US.

I NEED TO GIVE THE MISTRESS HER MEDICINE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

WHAT?

I RECOMMEND THAT YOU FORGET ABOUT HER AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

MORE IMPOR-TANTLY ...

DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE MISTRESS.

BRRRM

IT'S JUST HER ANEMIA MEDICINE.

NO...

I DOUBT WE WILL MEET AGAIN.

BE WELL, ICHIJO.

HUH?

...

KOFF

WHAT DID THAT...

...MEAN?

BRRRRRM

NO.

SHE HASN'T RESPONDED TO MY CALLS OR TEXTS.

SO...

DID YOU REACH HER?

DIING DOOONG

I'LL STOP BY TO SEE HER TODAY.

I'M FREE ANYWAY.

GOOD IDEA.

WHAT A HANDFUL...

...

AND HONDA JUST DRAGGED HER OFF?

I HOPE MARIKA'S OKAY...

THERE MUST BE SOMETHING WRONG WITH HER...

SHE PASSED OUT WHEN YOU WERE ON THE ISLAND TOO, RIGHT?

CLATTER

OH! MS. YUI! GOOD MORNING!

YOOO! TIME FOR HOME-ROOOOM!

DAMN... I'M REALLY WORRIED...

HONDA AND TACHIBANA... THEY WERE BOTH SO DIFFERENT THAN USUAL...

GEEZ... WHAT WAS ALL THAT YESTERDAY?

ER... UMM...

...

WORMP WORMP

I HAVE SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT TO TELL YOU.

?

I GUESS I SHOULD JUST GIVE YOU THE PLAIN FACTS.

UH... WHERE SHOULD I START?

...MARIKA TACHIBANA CHANGED SCHOOLS.

AS OF YESTER-DAY...

WHA...

?!

Huh ...?

WHAAAAAAT?!

WHAAAT?!

AS OF YESTER-DAY?!

TACHI-BANA?!

CHANGED SCHOOLS?!

I DON'T KNOW ALL THE DETAILS EITHER.

JUST THAT SHE'S GOING BACK TO HER HOME IN KYUSHU SUDDENLY FOR HEALTH REASONS.

ALL OF THE PAPERWORK WAS PROCESSED BEFORE I EVEN FOUND OUT.

YUI!

I MEAN...

MS. YUI, WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY CHANGED SCHOOLS?

WHY SO SUDDEN ?!

IS IT REALLY TRUE?!

NO!

FOR REAL?!

SO...SHE TRANSFERRED AS OF YESTERDAY?

WE DIDN'T EVEN GET TO SAY GOOD-BYE...

SHE'S NEVER COMING BACK?

HEY, RAKU... WHAT'S THE DEAL?

TACHI-BANA'S CHANGING SCHOOLS?

I'M TOTALLY CONFUSED!

HOW SHOULD I KNOW?

WHAT HONDA SAID YESTERDAY...

DID SHE MEAN IT LITERALLY?

"I DOUBT WE WILL MEET AGAIN."

HOW CAN THIS BE?!

THE NUMBER YOU HAVE DIALED IS UNAVAILABLE OR...

GRR!

I DON'T CARE!

BUT WE'RE STILL IN HOME-ROOM...

WAIT... I'LL CALL HER.

TACHIBANA...

ARE YOU REALLY...

MEDICINE ?!

CARETAKER ?!

RATS! WHAT IS THIS?!

WHAT'S GOING ON?!

KLIK

DID SHE REALLY CHANGE SCHOOLS?

I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE IT...

WELL... SHE DIDN'T SHOW AGAIN TODAY.

I TRIED YESTERDAY.

THERE WAS NOBODY THERE.

DID YOU TRY HER HOUSE?

I CAN'T BELIEVE SHE'D DISAPPEAR WITHOUT TELLING YOU...

RAKU... YOU REALLY DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING?

UH... I'LL PRETEND I DIDN'T HEAR THAT...

You could go to jail!

...BUT STRANGELY ENOUGH, HER FILE WAS TOTALLY DELETED.

Like she'd never been here.

I TRIED HACKING INTO THE SCHOOL'S COMPUTER SYSTEM...

YEAH, BUT THEY CAN'T GIVE OUT PRIVATE INFORMATION.

SHOULDN'T THEY HAVE HER CONTACT INFO?

DID YOU TRY ASKING THE SCHOOL?

LIKE WHAT'S GOING ON WITH HER...

I WISH WE AT LEAST HAD MORE INFORMATION.

SHE WAS ALWAYS SELFISH, BUT THIS IS TOO MUCH!!

I CAN'T JUST ACCEPT THIS!!

ARGH! THIS JUST ISN'T COOL!

It's a big place.

BUT WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE IN KYUSHU SHE IS!

FINE!! I'LL GO TO KYUSHU AND FIND HER!

GASP!

SHEESH... AREN'T THERE ANY OTHER CLUES?

IS THIS REALLY... THE END?

WHAT ABOUT...?

KYUSHU... I KNOW!

SO... WHERE YOU WANT ME TO START?

HOWDY!! LONG TIME NO TALK, YOU BONERHEAD!!

THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE CALLING RIGHT ABOUT NOW!

Who's he talking to, anyway?
Did you hear the word "boner head"?

IT'S BEEN A WHILE! SINCE SUMMER, RIGHT?

FIGURED YOU'D BE A-CALLIN' SOON!

CALLING 'BOUT MARIKA, RIGHT?

I'LL TELL YOU ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW!

Chapter 182: Deal

HANG ON!!

HEY, RAKU! WE WANNA LISTEN TOO!

MARIKA'S FRIEND WHO CAME LAST YEAR!

WAIT... IS THAT MIKAGE?!

WHO IS IT?

WELL, SURE.

HOW MUCH DID MARIKA TELL YOU?

YOU KNEW THIS WOULD HAPPEN?

?!

HER TIME RAN OUT?

I HEARD ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON.

HER TIME RAN OUT, DIDN'T IT?

SO SHE KEPT YOU TOTALLY IN THE DARK, HUH?

IT SEEMED LIKE SOMETHING TO DO WITH HER HEALTH... IS THAT RIGHT?

WELL... NOTHING, REALLY...

I KNEW SHE WAS HIDING SOMETHING FOR A LONG TIME, THAT'S ALL.

KEPT MUM TILL THE END, DID SHE?

WELL, WELL...

THAT'S JUST LIKE HER.

...BE-CAUSE ...

SHE CHANGED SCHOOLS ...

...MADE A VERY STRICT DEAL.

...MARIKA AND HER MOTHER...

SHE TELL YOU ANYTHING ABOUT HER FAMILY?

NO...

WITH HER MOTHER?

DEAL?

GOES BACK HUNDREDS OF YEARS...

IT'S REALLY FAMOUS 'ROUND WHERE WE LIVE.

WELL...

MARIKA'S ANCENSTRAL HOME IN KYUSHU IS ONE OF THE OLDEST SAMURAI ESTATES IN THE AREA.

MARIKA'S MOTHER IS THE GRAND MATRI-ARCH.

THE WOMEN WERE ALWAYS THE LEADERS OF HER FAMILY.

BUT THEY WERE USUALLY SICKLY GIRLS...

...AND MARIKA WAS NO EXCEP-TION.

FOR THAT REASON, THEY'RE KINDA OVER-SENSITIVE ABOUT HAVING AN HEIRESS.

THEY'VE ALWAYS BEEN SUPER STRICT AND OVER-PROTECTIVE WITH MARIKA.

NORMALLY THE GIRLS DON'T GET TO PICK THEIR OWN HUSBANDS.

BUT IN MARIKA'S CASE...

MARIKA STARTED GETTIN' BETTER...

...WHEN SHE MET YOU.

SO MARIKA WENT TO HER MOTHER AND MADE A DEAL.

WHEN SHE WAS OF MARRIAGEABLE AGE...SHE WANTED TO GO TO YOUR HIGH SCHOOL...

CONDI-TIONS?

YUP.

...UNDER TWO CONDI-TIONS.

OF COURSE, IT WAS A CRAZY REQUEST.

BUT HER FATHER BACKED HER UP, AND MARIKA'S MOTHER ALLOWED IT...

MARIKA FIGURED HER MOTHER'D REFUSE.

...SHE WAS TO COME HOME IMMEDIATELY.

IF MARIKA GOT TOO SICK TO GO TO SCHOOL...

...

...BUT FIRST AND FORE-MOST, SHE MONITORS MARIKA'S HEALTH.

SHE'S CHARGED WITH PRO-TECTING AND CARING FOR MARIKA...

SHE ANSWERS DIRECTLY TO MARIKA'S MOTHER.

HONDA WAS IN CHARGE OF MAKING THAT CALL.

IF...

...MARIKA DIDN'T WIN HIS LOVE...

...WAS THAT IF SHE PERSUADED HER FIANCÉ TO MARRY HER BEFORE HER HEALTH GOT BAD, HER MOTHER WOULD GIVE THEM HER BLESSING.

THE OTHER ONE...

BUT IF NOT...

AND THE OTHER CONDITION?

AND NEVER AGAIN CHALLENGE HER MOTHER'S AUTHORITY.

...UPON HER RETURN HOME...

...SHE WOULD IMMEDIATELY MARRY THE SUITOR OF HER MOTHER'S CHOOSING.

WHAT ...?!

...

WELL, MARIKA'S FATHER IS ON HER SIDE.

HE RESPECTS HER FEELINGS.

Calling...

YOU DON'T SAY?

THAT'S NOT A NORMAL FAMILY THING!!

SHE HAS TO OBEY HER MOTHER FOREVER?!

WHAT A TYRANT!

BUT SINCE HER FAMILY'S A MATRIARCHY, MARIKA'S MOTHER HAS THE FINAL WORD.

HER PARENTS FOUGHT ABOUT IT AT THE TIME.

HE WANTED HER TO MARRY SOMEONE SHE LIKED.

HE'S THE ONE WHO ARRANGED YOUR MARRIAGE WHEN YOU ALL WERE FIVE.

YOU SHOULD ASK MARIKA HERSELF.

WELL...

I MET HER BEFORE, AND I WASN'T IMPRESSED.

HONESTLY, SHE **DOESN'T GIVE A FIG ABOUT MARIKA.**

MARIKA'S MOTHER IS A DIFFERENT STORY.

THEY BOTH LIVED IN THE SAME HOUSE...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

Calling...

SHE DOESN'T SEE PEOPLE MUCH FOR THAT REASON.

HER MOTHER'S HEALTH IS ALSO FRAGILE.

BUT ONE DAY...

WHAT ?!

SEVEN ?!

...TILL MARIKA WAS SEVEN.

...BUT THEY NEVER SPOKE...

They never spoke?!

SHE WAS SO EXCITED WHEN SHE HANDED IT OVER.

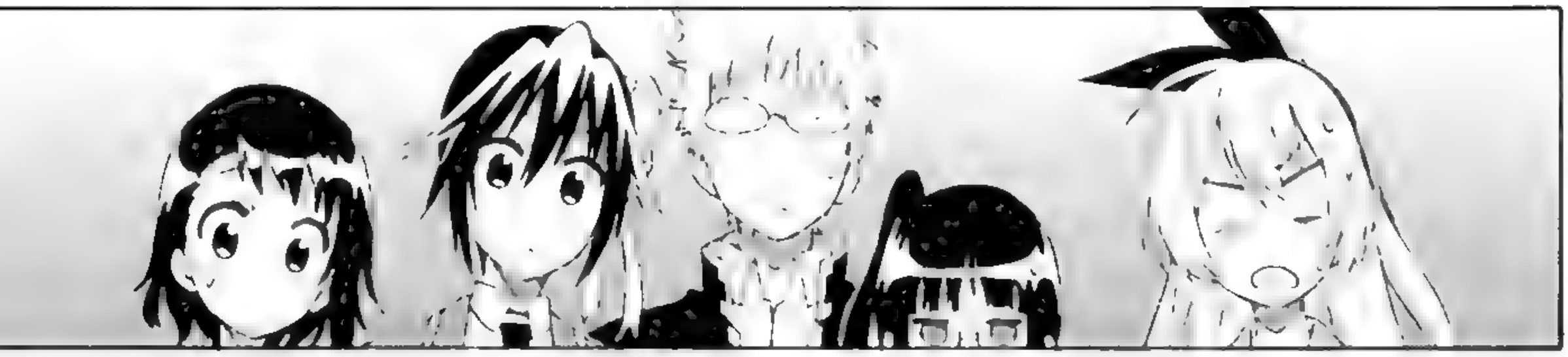
SHE WANTED TO GIVE HER MOTHER A BIRTHDAY GIFT.

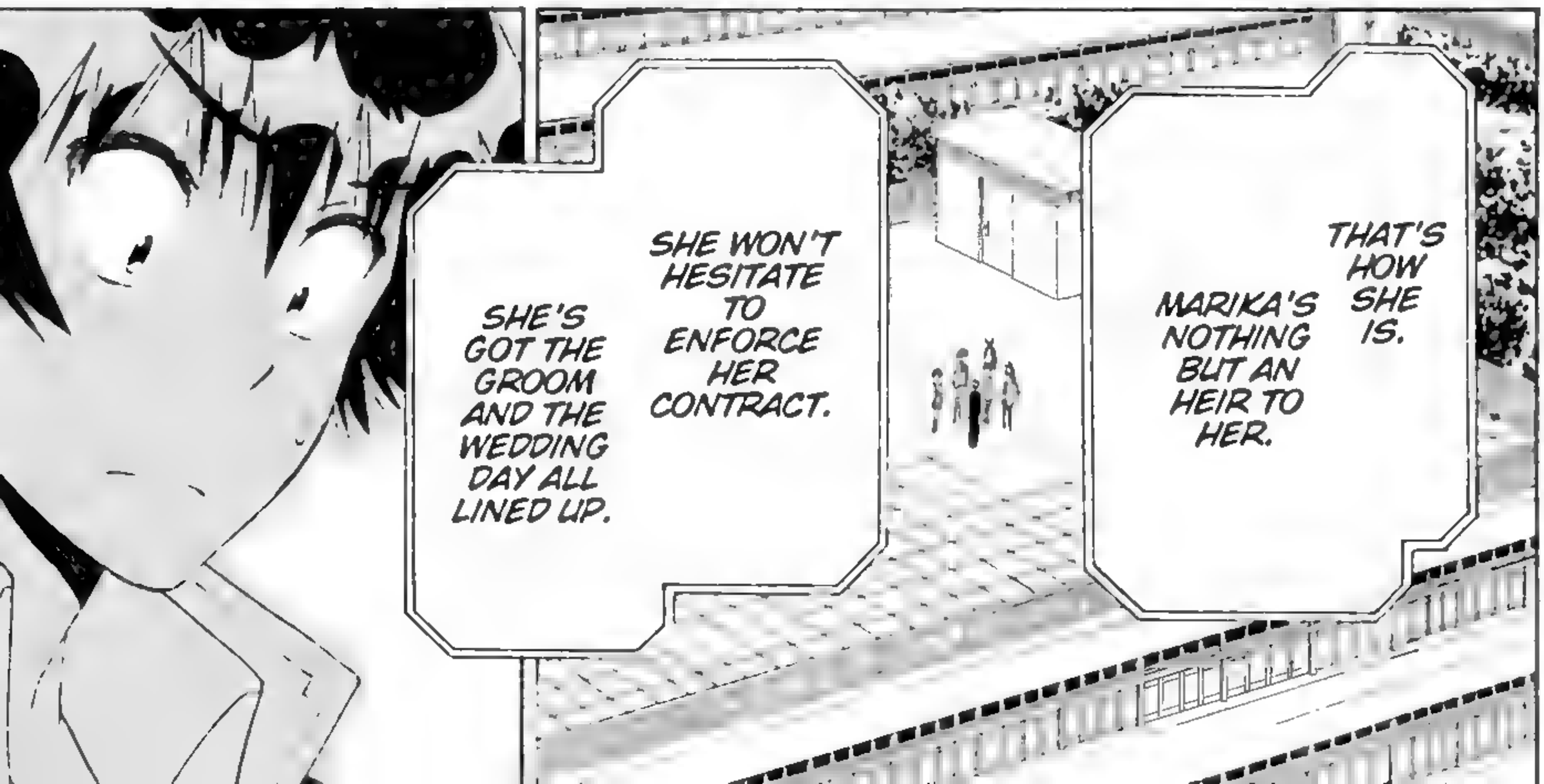
MARIKA INSISTED ON SEEING HER MOTHER.

AND THEN...

SO SHE SNUCK BACK IN.

AFTERWARD, SHE WANTED TO TALK TO HER MOTHER AGAIN.




SHE'S GOT THE GROOM AND THE WEDDING DAY ALL LINED UP.
SHE WON'T HESITATE TO ENFORCE HER CONTRACT.
MARIKA'S NOTHING BUT AN HEIR TO HER.
THAT'S HOW SHE IS.

WHY WOULD SHE AGREE TO SUCH A THING?!

THAT'S AWFUL!!

IT WAS THE ONLY WAY SHE COULD COME TO YOUR SCHOOL.

TOMORROW ?!

More than twice her age?!

HIS FORTIES?!

IT'S TOMOR-ROW.

THE MAN'S A DIVORCED STEEL MAGNATE IN HIS FORTIES.

ALL OR NOTHING.

...TO WIN YOUR LOVE BEFORE HER HEALTH FAILED...

...AND SHE LOST.

SHE STAKED EVERY-THING...

I BET SHE'S RESIGNED TO HER FATE NOW.

IT WAS A PURE GAMBLE...

THE CONTRACT WAS HER ONLY CHANCE.

MARIKA DIDN'T WANT THAT.

SHE DIDN'T WANT TO WIN YOU OVER THAT WAY.

IF YOU HAD KNOWN ...

...YOU WOULD'VE FELT A SENSE OF OBLIGA-TION AND PITY, RIGHT?

WHY DIDN'T SHE TELL US?!

DON'T YOU GET IT?

FIGURED YOU MIGHT WANNA DO SOMETHING TO HELP HER.

...BUT I FIGURE YOU GOT A RIGHT TO KNOW.

SHE WOULDN'T WANT ME TELLING YOU THIS...

IT'S UP TO YOU NOW...

BUT...MARIKA DIDN'T WANT MY HELP, AND THERE AIN'T MUCH I COULD DO ANYWAY.

I WISH I COULD RESCUE MARIKA...

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

I NEVER IMAGINED...

THIS IS MORE THAN WE BARGAINED FOR...

UP TO US?

SHEESH ...

THAT'S GOING TOO FAR!!

AND SHE HAS TO OBEY FOREVER?

THE WEDDING'S TOMORROW?!

HER MOTHER'S ALREADY CHOSEN THE GROOM...

SKWEEZ

HOW CAN I BREAK UP HER MARRIAGE?!

I WAS PLANNING TO REJECT HER!

HOW CAN I FACE HER UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES?!

BUT...

WE HAVE TO HELP TACHIBANA!

BUT...

HAVE I ANY RIGHT TO TRY TO HELP HER?!

DO I BREAK UP HER MARRIAGE... AND THEN TELL HER I DON'T WANT TO BE WITH HER?!

HAVE I ANY RIGHT...?

IF SHE'S RESIGNED HERSELF TO HER FATE...

NOW WHAT?

WELL, ICHIJO?

ICHIJO...

...

SIN

YEOW...

ACK!!

THIS ISN'T LIKE YOU!!

THERE'S NO WAY SHE'LL BE HAPPY MARRYING SOMEONE SHE DOESN'T LOVE!!

WHO CARES?!

SO WHAT IF SHE DOESN'T WANT OUR HELP?!

I KNOW YOU WANT TO HELP!!

SO LET'S GO!!

YOU'RE SUCH AN IDIOT! IT'S LIKE A KNEE-JERK REACTION, THE WAY YOU RUSH TO HELP PEOPLE IN TROUBLE!!

SO WHY NOT GO FOR IT NOW AND THINK ABOUT IT LATER?

THAT'S THE RAKU I KNOW!

SHE BEAT ME TO IT...

HEH...

I WAS BEING AN IDIOT.

THANK YOU, CHITOGE.

...BUT I'M NOT AFRAID TO BEG.

I DON'T KNOW IF HER MOTHER WILL LISTEN...

I'LL BE RIGHT THERE, MISS SHINOHARA.

I'LL GO WITH YOU.

NOT THAT SHE DESERVES MY HELP...

THEN I'M GOING TOO.

IF SHE'S IN TROUBLE...

...I WANT TO HELP.

EVEN IF TACHIBANA DOESN'T WANT MY HELP, I CAN'T LOOK THE OTHER WAY.

OH, GREAT.

AND SO DO I!

HA. I KNOW YOU WANT TO GO TOO, RURI.

YOU KNOW WE HAVE SCHOOL TOMORROW, RIGHT?

THERE'S POWER IN NUMBERS!

M-ME TOO!

KCHAK

DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT PART!!

HUH?!

FLYING IS FASTEST, BUT CAN WE GET TICKETS SOON ENOUGH?

HOW'LL WE GET THERE?

IF WE TAKE THE BULLET TRAIN... WELL...

THE WEDDING'S TOMOR-ROW...

I JUST ARRANGED THE FLIGHT!

YOU'LL HAVE MY SUPPORT AND THAT OF THE ENTIRE CHAR SIU KAI TO GET TO KYUSHU.

U U YUI?!

U You heard?

I HEARD EVERY-THING!!

U U MS. YUI?!

BR

N!

Wow!!

I'LL TELL THEM WE'RE HAVING AN INTENSIVE OVERNIGHT STUDY GROUP TONIGHT.

KOSAKI, MIYAMOTO, SHU...YOU'LL NEED AN EXCUSE FOR YOUR FAMILIES, RIGHT?

I'LL SMOOTH THINGS OUT WITH SCHOOL AND YOUR PARENTS.

THANKS, YUI!!

ALL RIGHT!

LEAVE IT TO US!!

I'M SURE SHE'LL BE THRILLED TO SEE YOU.

I WISH I COULD GO TOO.

I'M GLAD YOU'RE GOING TO HELP MARIKA.

...

—!

—!

—!

MARIKA...

YEAAAH!!

ALL RIGHT!! LET'S GET GOING THEN!!

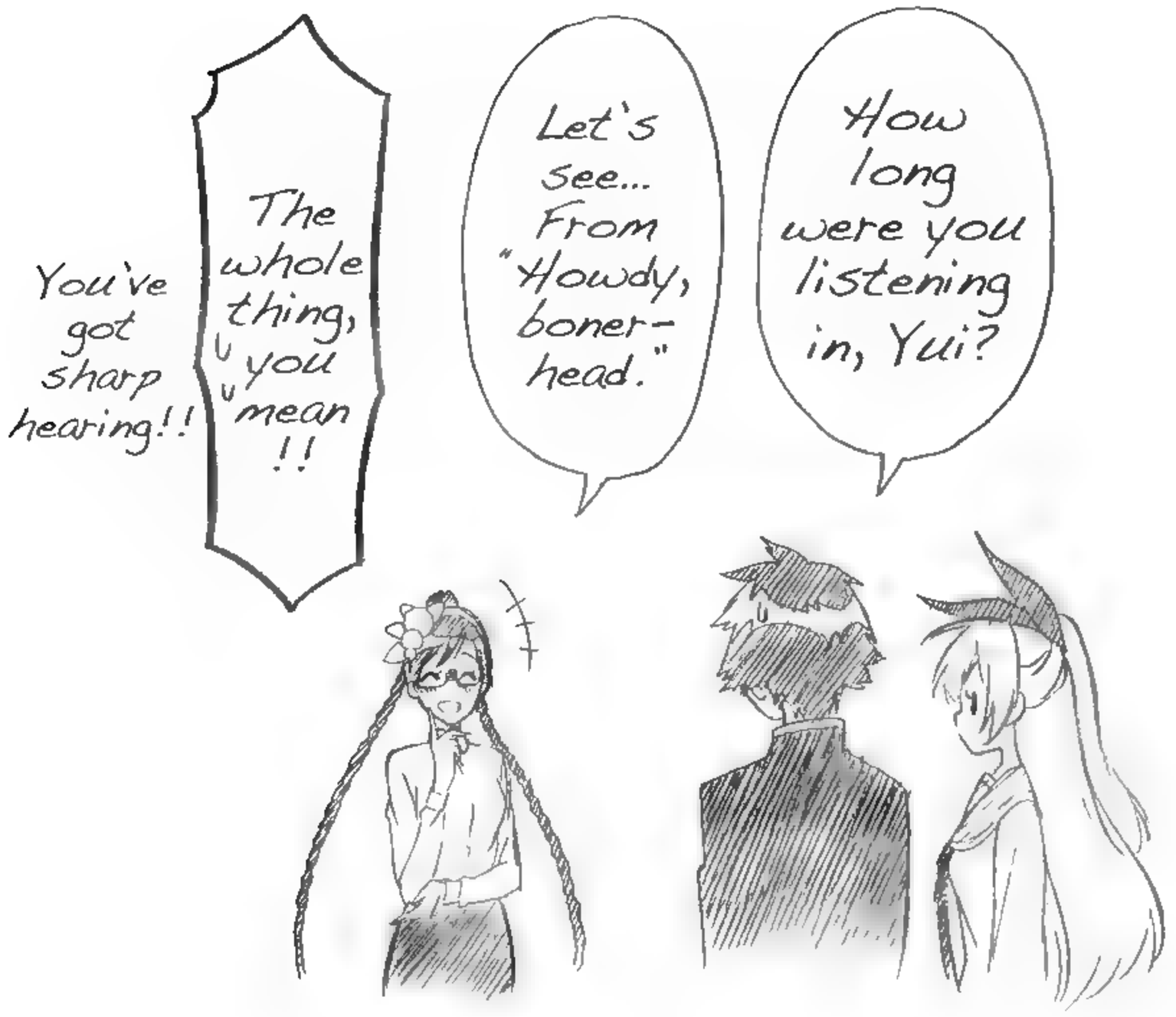
WE'RE STORMING TACHI-BANA'S HOUSE!!

FOR REAL...

YOU MADE SOME GOOD FRIENDS...

WAIT HERE.

YOUR MOTHER WILL BE IN MOMEN-TARILY.


How long were you listening in, Yui?
Let's see... From "Howdy, boner-head."
The whole thing, you mean!!
You've got sharp hearing!!

VRE

E

EE EE EEEEEE

WE'LL GET THERE IN THE EVENING.

JUST UNDER TWO HOURS.

HOW FAR IS IT TO KYUSHU?

YOU GOT IT!

SEE YOU SOON, YUI!

HAVE A SAFE TRIP!

TAKE GOOD CARE OF MARIKA!

Chapter 183: Message

WHO KNEW MARIKA WAS IN A SIMILAR SITUATION?

WOW...

I UNDER-STAND YOU'VE HAD QUITE A GOOD MARRIAGE PROPOSAL.

I'm get- ting u ex- ucited! We get on here?

SO THAT'S WHY...

YOU'RE NOT ALONE, MARIKA.

HANG IN THERE...

THANK YOU, MARIKA.

SEE Y'ALL THERE.

THANKS FOR EVERY-THING! SEE YOU!

RIGHT!

I'M HEADING OVER THAT WAY TOO.

WHEN YOU ALL GET TO THE AIRPORT, I'LL HAVE A CAR WAITING.

IT'LL TAKE Y'ALL TO MARIKA.

...YOU REALLY MADE YOURSELF SOME GOOD PALS...

BEEP

MARIKA...

VREEEEEEE

...HAVEN'T TOLDJA THE MOST IMPORTANT PART YET.

I STILL...

BUT...

KCHAK

SORRY, GANG...

...I STILL...

VREEEEE

SQUEEZE

SORRY.

BUT FOR NOW...

JUST A BIT LONGER.

YOUR MOTHER WILL BE HERE SOON.

...

OH...

KYUOOO

WHAT'RE YOU DOING?

...

SHOOP

I'M RUNNING AWAY!!

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK

OSH

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAA

TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK

KER

SMASH

VWISH

I'VE HAD LOTS OF PRAC-TICE.

...

I'M COMPLETELY IMMOBILIZED AND YET FAIRLY COMFORT-ABLE.

YOU'VE GOTTEN BETTER, HONDA.

TAK

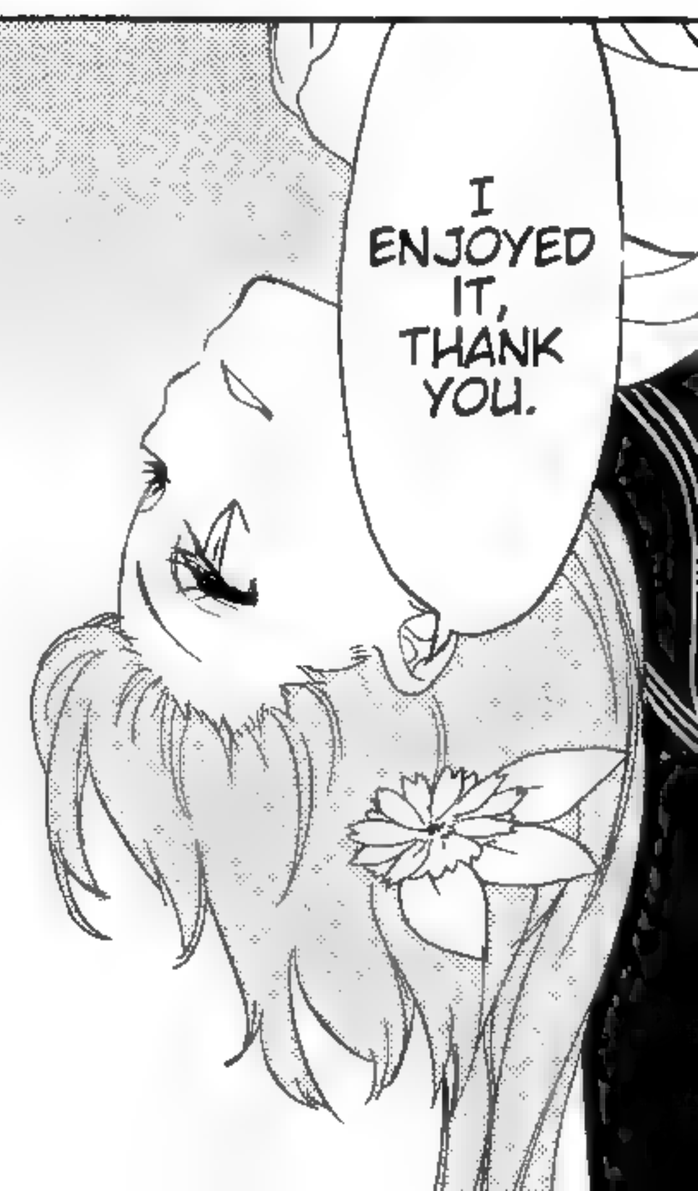
YOU SEEM QUITE ENERGETIC.

WELCOME HOME, MARIKA.

YOU NEVER TOOK MY CALLS. I WAS WORRIED.
DID YOU ENJOY HIGH SCHOOL?

GOOD.
THEN YOU CAN TAKE A HUSBAND NOW WITHOUT REGRETS.

I WOULD'VE CONTINUED TO HAD I NOT BEEN FORCIBLY REMOVED.


I ENJOYED IT, THANK YOU.

THAT'S MY FANTASY...

TO WEAR A WEDDING DRESS AND SUCH...

IN THAT CASE...

I'D LIKE A WEDDING IN THE WESTERN TRADITION.

DO YOU HAVE ANY WISHES FOR YOUR WEDDING TOMORROW?

I'LL DO WHAT I CAN TO ACCOMMODATE THEM.

THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE.

AND NEVER BOTHER ME AGAIN?

AND WHILE YOU'RE AT IT, WOULD YOU LET ME GO BACK TO BONYARI HIGH?

AND YOU LOST.

YOU SET THE TERMS AND TOOK ON THIS CHALLENGE YOURSELF.

YOU MADE A PROMISE.

BIG GIRLS KEEP THEIR PROMISES, DON'T THEY?

SEE YOU THERE TOMORROW.

I'LL MAKE THE ARRANGE-MENTS FOR THE WEDDING.

THIS IS TACHI-BANA'S PLACE?

...

KCHAK

SKREE

IT'S HUGE!

IT'S A FULL-ON PALACE!

IT MIGHT BE TOTALLY MODERNIZED ON THE INSIDE.

There's security cameras and stuff.

I KNOW SHE COMES FROM SAMURAI LINEAGE... BUT THIS IS CRAZY!

PEOPLE ACTUALLY LIVE HERE?!

WINDOW ?

YOU'VE GOT GOOD EYES.

THERE'S A BROKEN WINDOW... I WONDER WHY...

?

WHAT'S UP, CHITOGE ?

STARE

DING-DONG

MAY I ASK WHO THIS IS?

YES.

EXCUSE ME.

WE'RE FRIENDS OF MARIKA TACHI-BANA'S...

WELL, LET'S GO IN.

WE'VE GOT TO TALK TO TACHIBANA'S MOM, QUICK!

HOPE SHE LISTENS TO US...

WE CAN'T DO THAT!

IT'S ABOUT TOMORROW'S WEDDING! IT'S IMPORTANT!

I'M AFRAID VISITORS WITHOUT AN APPOINT-MENT CANNOT BE ACCOM-MODATED.

I'M VERY SORRY, BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO COME BACK ANOTHER TIME.

WE'D LIKE TO SPEAK WITH MARIKA'S MOTHER...

EXCUSE ME, BUT DO YOU HAVE AN APPOINT-MENT?

HUH?

DING-DONG

EXCUSE ME.

KLIK

I'M AFRAID THAT'S THE RULE.

MAY I ASK WHO THIS IS?

YES.

THEN PLEASE TELL MARIKA ...

...THAT WE'RE HERE!!

AND THEN...

KLIK

I'M AFRAID I CANNOT DO THAT. EXCUSE ME.

IF WE COULD AT LEAST REACH MARIKA, THAT WOULD BE SOMETHING, BUT...

Can't call her cell either.

THEY WON'T EVEN GIVE HER A MESSAGE FROM US?

What's up with that?

WHAT NOW?

WE'RE OUT OF LUCK.

I HAVE A GREAT IDEA!

HEY!

KCHAK

MARIKA? LONG TIME NO SEE, GIRL!

HOW YA DOIN'?

PLEASE COME IN, MISS SHINO-HARA.

PLEASE ABIDE BY THE TWENTY MINUTES ALLOTTED FOR YOUR VISIT.

RIGHT, GOTCHA.

MARIKA?!

WORMP

WHY...

IF IT ISN'T MIKAGE!

YOU OKAY?!

I'VE NEVER SEEN YA LIKE THIS!!

DONE. BYE-BYE. SAYONARA. NOTHING MATTERS NOW. *PFFFT!*

MY LIFE IS OVER.

I TOOK A GAMBLE AND LOST.

YOU'D LOOK LIKE THIS TOO...

OH... YOU'RE IN BAD SHAPE.

HMPH!

GO AHEAD AND BE AS SAD AS YOU WANT.

YEAH...

I GAVE IT EVERYTHING I HAD AND STILL LOST.

I TOOK ON A BATTLE TO CHANGE MY FATE.

DON'T I DESERVE TO BE A LITTLE SAD?

I WAS WITH RAKU DEAREST!

DUH.

YOU MUSTA REALLY LOVED IT THERE.

STILL...FOR YOU TO BE THIS SAD...

PSH...

YEAH, RIGHT.

YOU LOVED BEING WITH THEM TOO, RIGHT?

WHAT ABOUT THE REST?

WHATCHA MEAN?

JUST RAKU DEAR-EST?

IT REALLY WAS.

IT WAS FUN...

YES...

AND ONODERA IS THE NICEST PERSON YOU'D EVER MEET.

AND YUI PLAYS IT SO BRAVE, EVEN THOUGH SHE'S A TOTAL CHICKEN.

TSUGUMI IS ALWAYS BLOCKING MY WAY...

...BUT SHE IS REALLY SUPER PURE OF HEART...

AND MAIKO ALWAYS PLAYS THE PERV, BUT HE'S SUPER AWARE OF EVERYONE'S FEELINGS.

AND MIYAMOTO ACTS COOL, BUT SHE'S REALLY A CARING FRIEND.

HEH HEH...

AND...

BUT I NEVER WILL.

SURE I DO.

YOU WISH YOU COULD SEE THEM AGAIN?

EVEN IF THEY DID COME HERE...

...THERE'S NO WAY THEY'D EVER GET INSIDE...

HONDA IS EXTREMELY THOROUGH.

HONDA DID THE TRANSFER PAPERWORK.

ALL INFORMATION CONNECTED TO THIS ADDRESS HAS BEEN ERASED. RAKU DEAREST AND THE OTHERS HAVE NO WAY OF FINDING ME.

SHRIEK-KRAAAAAK!!

KRAK

KRAK

KRAK

YOU THEEERE?!

MARIKAAAA!!

YOU THEEERE?!

Chapter 184: Role

...

WHA...

...

WHY...

SHOOP

MIKAGE ?

WHSH

!!

WOOSH

!!

I CANNOT DO THAT.

YOUR MOTHER HAS FORBIDDEN YOU TO HAVE CONTACT WITH YOUR FRIENDS FROM BONYARI HIGH.

...

...

GET OUT OF MY WAY, HONDA!

BRMMMBB

WELL... IF MARIKA COMES OUT, WE CAN TALK WITH HER, RIGHT?

WHAT'RE YOU DOING, CHITOGE?!

SURE, I GET THAT, BUT...

...

YIKES!!
RUN!!
WE'RE SORRY!!
YAP
YAP
HEY, YOU PUNKS! WHAT'S ALL THIS COMMO-TION?
YOU WANT US TO CALL THE COPS?!
YAP
YAP
BAM!!!
RAKU DEAREST...
...AND THE OTHERS ARE HERE?
FOR ME?
WHY...?
YAP
YAP
MIKAGE ...
WHY DID YA GO AND DO THAT?

WHY'D YOU DO IT?

PLUS, THERE'S NO TELLIN' WHAT MY MOTHER MIGHT DO!

THIS AIN'T GONNA HELP!

I DIDN'T WANT THIS!

...BUT I AIN'T CONVINCED.

YOU SAY THAT...

...!

I SEE HOW HAPPY YOU ARE, CLEAR AS DAY!

HEY!

MIKA...

ADIEUUU!

TIME FOR MY EXIT.

Hold the wed-ding!!

SHOULD WE JUST CRASH THE WEDDING?

Thanks.

You okay, Onodera?

DON'T BE AN IDIOT.

WELL, THIS STINKS.

SHE WON'T EVEN SEE US!

HAHH

HAHH

EEEE

WOW-ZERS!!

IF IT AIN'T ONODERA, THE DAINTY, SWEET ANGEL!!

JOLT!

SKIN LIKE WHITE-FLOUR DUMPLINGS!

SMELLS LIKE A RAY OF SUNSHINE!

OOH, YOUR HAIR'S AS PURTY AS EVER!

EEK!

EEK!

HFF

BOY, IS IT GOOD TO SEE YOU!!

HFF

HFF

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?!

FWHOO

Whoa...

KOBER

OOH, I JUST GOTTA TOUCH IT...

WHO'RE YOU CALLING MISS JUGS?!

That was mean...

SNIFFLE

WHATCHA DO THAT FOR, MISS JUGS?

WELL, I HAVE AN IDEA!

SO, YA'LL WANNA SPEAK WITH MARIKA'S MOTHER?

I'M JUST PLEASED AS PUNCH TO SEE YOU! ♪

YA'LL REALLY CAME!!

HERE?

YEAH.

IT LEADS TO THE CASTLE UNDERGROUND.

KR EEAK

MARIKA'S HOUSE IS SUPER OLD... THERE'S LOTSA STUFF LIKE THIS.

USED TO BE AN ESCAPE ROUTE FOR THE LORD OF THE CASTLE.

HEAVE!

A SECRET PASSAGEWAY MARIKA ONCE SHOWED ME.

HONDA'S IN THERE... WITH LOTSA GUARDS.

BUT IT'S A DANGEROUS GAMBLE.

PLUS, THERE'S NO TELLIN' WHAT MARIKA'S MOTHER WILL DO IF THEY CATCH YOU.

YA'LL WON'T GET TO MARIKA'S MOTHER BY NORMAL MEANS.

IF YOU'RE GONNA DO THIS, IT'S GONNA HAVE TO BE A SNEAK ATTACK!

...NOW WOULD BE THE TIME!

IF YOU WANNA BACK OUT...

DEFIN-ITELY ME.

I'M GOING TOO!

IF THE MISTRESS GOES, I GO!

IF YOU ALL GO, YOU'LL STAND OUT...

WHO ELSE?

I'M GOING! I'M IN THIS ALL THE WAY!

WE'VE COME THIS FAR... WE CAN'T GIVE UP NOW!

AND I GOT STUFF I GOTTA DO...

SO IT'S SETTLED!

Harsh!

GUESS I'LL STAY BACK TOO.

YOU SHOULDN'T. YOU'LL SLOW THEM DOWN.

M-ME TOO...

Ouch!

Unless you want to go along as bait...

THANKS FOR EVERY-THING!

COOL!

MARIKA'S MOTHER'S IN THE TOWER. TAKE CARE, NOW.

HERE'S A ROUGH MAP OF THE CASTLE.

GEE... WE CAME ALL THIS WAY, AND NOW WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING...

I feel useless!

Deal with it.

OH, NOT TO WORRY, DEARIES!

WELL, HERE GOES!

LATER!

...FOR YOU ALL!!

I GOT A SPECIAL JOB...

HUH?

I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING !!

HOW DARE YOU TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE DARKNESS TO... RAKU ICHIJO !!

EEK! DON'T TOUCH ME THERE, RAKU!!

SURE IS DARK ...

I'M A PRO AT UNDER-COVER WORK.

FOLLOW MY DIRECTIVES, AND I'LL MAKE SURE YOU BOTH GET TO MARIKA'S MOTHER.

Just try not to slow me down.

I'll try.

THAT'S COM-FORT-ING.

It was just a branch...

WE JUST HAVE TO NOT GET CAUGHT.

I CAN'T BELIEVE WE'RE DOING THIS.

IT'S BASICALLY BREAKING AND ENTERING.

ER...

WELL... TACHIBANA'S MOTHER SEEMS PRETTY EXTREME.

BRINGING HER BACK HERE, SETTING UP A WEDDING IN JUST TWO DAYS, FORBIDDING US TO SEE HER...

WHY WOULD SHE LISTEN TO SOMEONE LIKE ME?

SMAK!

?

WHAT'S WRONG?

DON'T TALK LIKE THAT!!

Whadja do that for?

THAT HURT!

IF YOU COMMUNI-CATE YOUR FEELINGS SINCERELY ...

YOU TAUGHT ME THAT.

...YOU JUST MIGHT REACH SOMEONE!

WE CAN DO THIS!!

IT'S OKAY!!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT MARIKA'S MOTHER IS LIKE...

LIKE ME AND MY MOM!

...BUT IF WE TALK IT THROUGH, I'M SURE WE CAN COME TO AN UNDER-STANDING!

YEAH!

YEAH. YOU'RE RIGHT.

LET'S GO.

SHOOP

!!

!!!

IT'S FINALLY OPENING UP...

HEY!

TAK-TAK-TAK-TAK-TAK

WHSH

HONDA!!

!!

GIVEN THAT MISS SHINOHARA HAS BEEN AIDING AND ABETTING YOU...

...I FIGURED YOU'D ATTEMPT THIS ROUTE OF INFILTRATION.

I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU.

PLEASE LEAVE.

I CAN'T LET YOU GO ANY FARTHER.

IF YOU RESIST, I'VE BEEN INSTRUCTED TO DETAIN YOU.

LEAVE ...

PLEASE LET US THROUGH.

WE'RE HERE TO SAVE TACHIBANA.

AREN'T YOU ON TACHIBANA'S SIDE, HONDA?

I KNOW THEY MADE A DEAL...BUT FORCING HER TO MARRY SOMEONE SHE'S NEVER MET...AND SWEAR ETERNAL OBEDIENCE?!

DO YOU REALLY THINK THIS IS RIGHT, HONDA?!

YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN SO PROTECTIVE ...

THAT'S JUST NOT NORMAL!!

I'M NOT ON ANYONE'S SIDE.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH HER ORDERS, I CARRIED OUT MY DUTIES TO PROTECT AND MONITOR MARIKA.

I'VE SERVED THE TACHIBANA FAMILY *SINCE BIRTH.*

I OBEY ONLY THE ORDERS OF CHIKA TACHIBANA, THE CURRENT MATRIARCH.

BUT THAT ISN'T MY ORIGINAL ROLE.

OFFICIALLY, I DO HAVE A POSITION ON THE POLICE FORCE.

SINCE...

SINCE BIRTH?

HUH?

I thought you were a police officer...

BEYOND PERSONAL PROTECTION, WE CONDUCT INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES, MONITORING OF ENEMY GROUPS, INFORMATION MANIPULATION, DESTRUCTIVE MISSIONS...

...AND OTHER HIGH-RISK UNDERCOVER WORK.

MY FAMILY HAS ALWAYS SERVED THE TACHIBANA BLOODLINE.

MY ORIGINAL ROLE...

...IS THAT OF A SECRET BODYGUARD.

...ONE SEC... ARE YOU SAYING ...

...YOU'RE A...

WAIT...

MY PERSONAL FEELINGS HAVE NEVER ENTERED INTO THE MATTER.

WE KEEP OUR PERSONAL FEELINGS OUT OF OUR WORK.

PROTECTING FROM THE SHADOWS, PERFORMING OUR DUTIES WITH ABSOLUTE LOYALTY.

...NINJA?

BASICALLY ?

WHAAAAT?!

WE WERE CALLED THUS IN ANCIENT TIMES.

HOPPITY HOP HOP

Your com-mand!

VWOOSH

STARE

YEAH...

BUT NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, THERE WERE LOTS OF CLUES...

Wow!!

THIS IS A SUR-PRISE.

NO WAY!! YOU MEAN NINJAS ARE ACTUALLY REAL?!

I'D RATHER NOT INJURE YOU.

PLEASE LEAVE.

THIS IS AS FAR AS YOU GO.

IT MAKES SENSE TO ME NOW.

NO WONDER YOUR FIGHTING TACTICS SEEMED UNCONVENTIONAL.

SHP

I SEE.

YOU TWO GO ON AHEAD.

I'LL HANDLE THIS.

TSUGUMI ...?!

MISTRESS ...

RAKU ICHIJO...

THIS WILL BE A HASSLE.

MISS TSUGUMI.

...
I will!
Watch out for fire and water and stuff like that!
Be careful, Tsu-gumi!

Chapter 185: Battle

YOU TWO GO ON AHEAD.

I'LL HANDLE THIS.

YOU JUST FOCUS ON YOUR GOAL AND ON KEEPING THE MISTRESS SAFE.

...

DON'T BE AN IDIOT.

IF YOU STAY, YOU WON'T BE THE SLIGHTEST HELP TO ME.

YOU SURE YOU'LL BE OKAY ALONE?!

TAKE CARE, TSUGUMI!

DON'T HURT HER NOW!

NOW GET GOING!

RIGHT!

I DIDN'T WANT THEM GETTING IN OUR WAY.

WELL...YOU LET THEM GO EASILY.

YOU FLATTER ME.

WE HAVEN'T FACED OFF LIKE THIS SINCE THE SCHOOL TRIP.

STOPPING YOU RIGHT NOW IS MORE IMPORTANT.

THE REGULAR SECURITY GUARDS CAN HANDLE THEM.

SHP

YOU GOT THE JUMP ON ME THAT DAY...

BUT THAT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN.

LOADED ...

...WITH TRANQ BULLETS.

SUBSONIC MAGAZINE WITH SILENCER...

SHOOP

I SEE...

SCARY, INDEED.

A HIGH-QUALITY WEAPON CAPABLE OF PARALYZING ITS TARGET WITH ONE SHOT TO ANY BODY PART.

THAT'S COR-RECT.

A COMBAT CHAIN!

I GET IT... SO THAT'S HER GAME.

WELL...

KA

SHING

I'D BETTER BE CAREFUL.

I'LL HAVE TO KEEP THE DISTANCE BETWEEN US AND WAIT FOR AN OPENING...

WHRR WHRR

WHRR

EVEN AGAINST A LONG CHAIN, MY WEAPON HAS MORE REACH AND POWER.

HOW WILL I GO ON THE OFFENSIVE?

IT WON'T BE EASY TO DEFEND AGAINST THAT WITH A KNIFE.

STARE

VOOSH

TAKE CAREFUL AIM, AND...

ZAS

SHE'S FAST!!

NGH!

I'M IM-PRESSED.

AH...

YOU PARRIED.

KLING

KA

SHING

KA

SHOOSH

KA

WOOSH

OOH

YA

SMASH!!

ZOOSH

WHA—
?!

KAKRASH

RUMBL

...

SHOO

SHOO

GAH!

BWOOSH

BLAM

...

WHA—?!

KLING

KLING

KA

OOH!

COME ON... BLOCKING BULLETS UNDER THE SONIC THRESHOLD... THAT'S A BASIC SKILL.

SURPRISED?

KRASH

I'LL HAVE TO MOVE IN CLOSER TO HIT HER...

SHOOSH

SO MUCH FOR REACH AND POWER! I HAVE NO EDGE AT ALL!

WASH

NGH!

OH!!

!!

OH NO!!

KA

SHING!!

BAM

BAM

BAM

KRA SHOO

TMP!!

KA SHOOSH

NGH!!

TANG TANG TANG TANG

SHOO

KSHA!!

AW

UK!

KA- SHING

BLAM

TING

BLAM

THOOSH!!

...AT THAT DISTANCE...

SHE HIT MY CHAIN...

WHRRR

SHING

WHOOSH

WHAM

SHOOSH

TANG

KA TING TING TING TING!!

VW

SHOOSH

TMP

PO

!!

SAME TO YOU.

NO OPENING TO USE MY TRANQ GUN...

YOU'RE QUITE...

...THE FORMIDABLE OPPONENT.

FLIT

DO YOU REALLY THINK YOU CAN SAVE THE YOUNG MISTRESS?

WHY DID YOU COME ALL THIS WAY?

TO CALL OFF THE WEDDING...

...AND TO ALLOW HER TO COME BACK TO BONYARI HIGH.

...TO TREAT HER BETTER.

TO CONVINCE MARIKA TACHIBANA'S MOTHER...

MY MISTRESS DENIES IT...

...BUT I KNOW SHE CARES ABOUT MARIKA TACHIBANA.

I DON'T KNOW HOW MARIKA TACHIBANA FEELS...BUT I DO KNOW THAT SHE WANTS TO COME BACK.

WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...

...ISN'T GOING TO HAPPEN.

OF COURSE...

NOT THAT I CARE WHAT SHE WANTS.

...THE YOUNG MISTRESS...

?!

...COULD NEVER GO BACK TO BONYARI HIGH.

CHIKA... MARIKA'S MOTHER... WOULD NEVER AGREE TO SUCH A THING.

AND EVEN IF SHE DID...

WELL, I'LL TELL YOU THEN.

THE MISTRESS ...

SO...YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

YOU MEAN...

MARIKA TACHI-BANA...

BEEP

WHAT?

NO!!

WHSH!!

VVVRRR!!

SHO

AUGH!

OCK!

NO...

YOU FINALLY LET YOUR GUARD DOWN.

IF YOU HAD REALLY PULLED OUT ALL THE STOPS...YOU PROBABLY WOULD HAVE BEATEN ME.

THAT'S WHY I HAD TO IMMOBILIZE YOU QUICKLY.

PLEASE BE ALL RIGHT!

I DON'T BELIEVE THIS!!

WHAT HAVE I DONE?!

MISTRESS... I'M SO SORRY!

RAKU ICHIJO!

WAA
AAA
AAA
TMP
TMP
TMP
TMP
PHWEET
TMP
TMP
TMP
WAA
AAA
AAA
Over there!!
Get them!!
AAA
TMP
TMP
TMP

...

RAKU DEAREST ...?

...
I'm so ashamed!
I can't believe I lost... And there wasn't even water or fire...
Gah!

THERE THEY ARE! THAT WAY!!

SURROUND THEM!!

PRIVEET

TMP TMP TMP TMP TMP TMP TMP TMP TMP TMP

STOP!!

Chapter 186: Why?

IS NOT! IF YOU HADN'T SCREWED UP...

WHAT?!

THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT, CHITOGE!

DRAT! THEY FOUND US SO QUICKLY!

MEE-YOW... MEEE YOOOW...

?!

Thassa weird kitty cat...

WELL, YOU WERE THE ONE WHO DID THAT HOKEY MEOWING!!

Huh? W-whazzat?

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU SNAPPED THAT TWIG!! WHAT A DOPE!

SNAP!

GAAAH!! LOOK WHERE THAT GOT US!

WE'LL JUST HAVE TO MAKE A MAD DASH FOR THE TOWER!

W-WELL ANYWAY, THEY SAW US. WE HAVE NO CHOICE!

TMP TMP TMP

IT'S SO DARK I CAN BARELY SEE...

DON'T TELL ME...

YAP

YAP

IT'S TSUGUMI! SHE'LL BE OKAY!

SHE'LL PROBABLY COME BACK US UP SOON!

SKREE

WONDER IF TSUGUMI'S OKAY...

SHUT UP!! I'M GIVING IT 120 PERCENT ALREADY!!

Don't compare me to you, okay?

WHEEZ

WHEEZ

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR ENERGY?

YOU'RE SO SLOW!

JUST FOCUS ON *THIS* RIGHT NOW!

There they are!!

Get them!!

YAP

YAP !!

OH NO!!

THEY'RE UP AHEAD TOO!

TMP TMP TMP TMP TMP TMP TMP

AT LEAST WE HAVE THE FLOOR PLAN.

IF ALL GOES WELL, WE SHOULD END UP...

RIP!

?!

RAKU! THIS WAY!

GASP!

TMPTMPTMP

NOW WHAT?!

WE'RE SUR-ROUNDED!

CLATTER

CLATTER

HUH?!

RAKU...

GRIT YOUR TEETH FOR A SEC.

WHAT'RE YOU...?!

SHUP!

WHY WAS THAT WINDOW...?

THERE'S NO WAY OUT OF HERE...

BUT... WE'RE STUCK NOW.

YO

WHAAA-?!

SHE

!RRRRRR

ROLLA ROLLA ROLLA

WHUD

OOF!

GO, QUICK!

CHITOGE ?!

JOLT

I'LL HANDLE THIS!

THIS WAS YOUR IDEA...SO YOU'D BETTER PULL IT OFF!

YOU GO AHEAD AND TALK TO MARIKA'S MOTHER!!

YAA

There she is!! Where'd the other one go?!

WAA

HYAA!!

Yikes!! Here they come!

WELL, WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?! GET GOING!

MARIKA'S FATE IS IN YOUR HANDS!

WHRR

...NO MATTER WHAT!

I'VE GOTTA SAVE TACHI-BANA...

I'M SORRY, CHITOGE!

SHF

I OWE YOU FOR THIS!

TMP TMP TMP TMP

I'VE GOT TO...!

WHO GOES THERE?

JOLT

HFF

HFF

HFF

SHP...

THIS AREA IS OFF-LIMITS...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

OH MAN!!

IS THIS IT?!

DAUGHTER?!

WAIT... DON'T TELL ME... THIS IS...

YOU'RE MARIKA'S...

MY DAUGH-TER'S LOVE INTEREST ...

OH...

I THOUGHT YOU LOOKED FAMILIAR. I'VE SEEN YOU IN HONDA'S REPORTS.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
RAKU ICHIJO...
...IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN?

ARE YOU... TACHIBANA'S... I MEAN... MARIKA'S... OLDER SISTER?

ER...

OR... YOUNGER SISTER, MAYBE?

WHAAAAAT?!

I'M HER MOTHER.

SO THAT'S WHAT TACHIBANA MEANT? THAT SHE'S AGELESS?!

"Monster" would fit best.

WELL... THERE'S SOMETHING SUPER-NATURAL ABOUT HER, NO DOUBT.

HANA LOOKED YOUNG!!! BUT THIS IS ON A WHOLE DIFFERENT LEVEL!!!

THEY COULD BE TWINS!!

SHE LOOKS SO YOUNG!!

I CAME HERE TO SPEAK WITH YOU... TACHIBANA'S MOTHER...

OH...

YES. RIGHT!

YOU HAVEN'T ANSWERED MY QUESTION.

GULP

WHAT IS IT?

...

WOULD YOU BE SO KIND AS TO SPARE ME A FEW MINUTES?

FIRST ...

I WANT TO APOLOGIZE FOR BARGING IN HERE LIKE THIS.

...MARIKA'S WEDDING TOMORROW.

I WANT YOU TO CALL OFF...

I UNDERSTAND THAT THE TWO OF YOU MADE A PROMISE.

PLEASE RECONSIDER!

...MAKING HER MARRY SOMEONE SHE DOESN'T EVEN KNOW IS SIMPLY TOO CRUEL.

AND WHILE MARIKA MAY HAVE AGREED TO IT AT THE TIME...

WHY?

I KNOW YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT YOUR LINEAGE AND SO FORTH, BUT I THINK YOU SHOULD RESPECT HER FEELINGS TOO!

SHE DOESN'T WANT THIS!

IS IT SO WRONG FOR A PARENT TO ARRANGE A MARRIAGE FOR HER CHILD?

AND WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO MARRY HER INSTEAD?

THERE'S A WORD FOR THAT... HYPOCRISY, I BELIEVE?

ARE YOU JUST TRYING TO ASSUAGE YOUR OWN GUILT?

SO WHAT GIVES YOU THE RIGHT TO INTERVENE?

...THAT YOU HAVE NO INTENTION OF RECIPROCATING MARIKA'S FEELINGS.

HONDA TELLS ME...

I WANT TO BE ON TACHIBANA'S SIDE!

BUT EVEN SO...

I KNOW.

I REALIZE THAT.

...AND BETTER FOR YOU TOO!

I THINK IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR HER...

EVEN IF YOU'RE GOING TO ARRANGE HER MARRIAGE... THERE'S NO NEED TO BE SO RUSHED, IS THERE?

PLEASE ...

GIVE MARIKA A BIT MORE TIME!

EXCUSE ME?

BECAUSE I'M SURE YOU WANT HER TO BE HAPPY, AND...

WHY ?

WELL...

WHY?

WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT FOR HER TO BE HAPPY?

HUH?

...

WELL...

WHY?

WHY SHOULD I?

I HAVE NO INTEREST IN HER HAPPINESS.

IT WAS THE SAME FOR MY MOTHER...

...AND HER MOTHER...AND HER MOTHER BEFORE HER...AND SO FORTH...

MY MOTHER ARRANGED MY MARRIAGE FOR THE FAMILY'S INTERESTS.

I WAS EVEN MORE SICKLY THAN MARIKA, SO I WASN'T ABLE TO ROAM THE OUTSIDE WORLD FREELY.

WHY SHOULD MARIKA BE TREATED ANY DIFFERENTLY?

YOU'RE JUST IMPOSING YOUR WILL ON HER...

YES.

MY WILL.

THERE'S NO REASON WHY SHE SHOULD BE UNHAPPY... WHY SHE SHOULD HAVE NO FREEDOM... IS THERE?

EVEN SO...

BUT...!

...

WELL ...

DON'T JUST TALK ABOUT HER LIKE SHE'S A POSSES-SION!

SHE MIGHT BE YOUR DAUGHTER, BUT SHE'S A HUMAN BEING!!

WHAT'S WRONG WITH ENFORCING MY WILL?

SO WHAT?

SHE'S MY DAUGH-TER, IS SHE NOT?

...!

AREN'T YOU IMPOSING YOUR WILL ON ME BY CRITICIZING ME BASED ON YOUR VALUE SYSTEM?

THERE ARE ALL SORTS OF FAMILIES AND LIFESTYLES IN THIS WORLD.

...

I'M ACTUALLY QUITE KIND-HEARTED.

DON'T YOU THINK?

ALLOWING HER TO GO TO SCHOOL WITH YOU FOR OVER A YEAR WAS AN ACT OF BENEVOLENCE ON MY PART.

THIS PERSON... REALLY AND TRULY...

I DON'T BELIEVE IT.

"HONESTLY, SHE DOESN'T GIVE A FIG ABOUT MARIKA."

"MARIKA'S MOTHER'S A DIFFERENT STORY."

...DOESN'T CARE ABOUT TACHIBANA'S FEELINGS...

...AT ALL!!

I'M TERRIBLY SORRY, MISTRESS CHIKA.

!!

I'M AFRAID I GOT SLIGHTLY HELD UP.

...

WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN, HONDA?

...

...

NOW, PLEASE DON'T PUT UP ANY NEEDLESS RESISTANCE.

I'M AFRAID I HAD TO RESTRAIN HER. AND MS. KIRISAKI AS WELL.

HONDA ?!

SO... WHERE'S TSUGUMI ...?

EVEN MINORS MUST ABIDE BY THE LAW.

WE'LL TURN THEM OVER TO THE POLICE AFTER THE WEDDING.

PUT THEM IN THE DUNGEON.

WE CAN'T HAVE THEM INTERFERING WITH THE CEREMONY TOMORROW.

JUST ONE...

...LAST THING.

THIS WAY, PLEASE ...

...MR. ICHIJO.

...ABOUT MARIKA?

HOW DO YOU FEEL...

PLEASE. DON'T MAKE ME SICK.

YOU WANT ME TO SAY I LOVE HER?

I'M SORRY TO HAVE TAKEN UP YOUR TIME.

I'LL GO NOW.

KCHIK

TINK
TINK
TINK

RATTLE!

IT'S OPEN!

Marika-style lock picking, Skill #153 of my Perfect Bride Toolkit.
♡
Time to use the special technique I learned in case Raku Dearest is ever kidnapped and locked away...
Tee hee...

Chapter 187: Locked Up

WHERE ARE YOU GOING AT THIS HOUR?

NOWHERE !!

NOTH-ING.

NOTHING HAPPENED.

PLEASE RELAX AND GET SOME REST. YOU HAVE A BIG DAY TOMORROW.

I'll be changing your lock.

I HEARD THE COMMO-TION OUTSIDE.

WHAT HAPPENED ?

RAKU DEAREST...!

THAT NOISE...

...WAS RAKU DEAREST AND THE OTHERS!!

PLIP

WHAM!!!

HYAAAA!!

SHEESH! IT WON'T BUDGE.

HELP ME OUT, TSUGUMI!

ARE YOU STILL BUMMED ABOUT HONDA BEATING YOU?

I'm sure it was a shock...

OH...

NO... THAT'S NOT IT... I JUST...

.....

...COULD NEVER GO BACK TO BONYARI HIGH.

THE YOUNG MISTRESS ...

WHAT SHOULD I DO...?

BUT WHAT GOOD WOULD IT DO TO TELL HER NOW?

SHOULD I TELL MISTRESS CHITOGE WHAT HONDA SAID?

?

WHAT...

SHF

KCHANG!

AND KEEP IT DOWN!

SHOVE

THERE. GO ON.

TAK

TAK

TAK

PLEASE. DON'T MAKE ME SICK.

YOU WANT ME TO SAY I LOVE HER?

NGH!!

SHE REALLY DOESN'T CARE ABOUT HER DAUGHTER'S HAPPINESS?!

"DON'T MAKE ME SICK"?!

WHAT KIND OF PARENT IS SHE?!

WHAT'S WRONG WITH HER?!

AAAUGH!! GAÄÄAAH!!

DOESN'T TACHIBANA MATTER TO HER?!

THIS IS NOTHING LIKE THAT TIME WITH HANA!!

I NEVER THOUGHT PEOPLE LIKE THAT REALLY EXISTED!!

JUST THINKING ABOUT IT TICKS ME OFF!!

...

BUT FIRST, I'VE GOTTA GET OUTTA HERE SOMEHOW...

I'LL SHOW HER...

WHAZ-
...?!
ZAT?!
WHSHH
A ROOMIE ?!
!!
...YOU GOT SHUT DOWN PRETTY BAD.
LOOKS LIKE...
TACHI-BANA'S FATHER ...?!
...
WHA ...

I WANTED TO TALK TO MY WIFE ABOUT MY DAUGH-TER...

...SO I SOUGHT OUT AN AUDIENCE WITH HER...

MORE OR LESS THE SAME REASON YOU ARE.

W-WHY'RE YOU IN HERE?!

SHE LOCKED UP THE CHIEF OF POLICE IN A DUNGEON?!

Heh heh...

BUT SHE BASICALLY LOCKED ME UP IN HERE WITHOUT LISTENING TO A WORD I SAID.

...

WELL...

JUDGING FROM ALL THAT HOLLERING YOU WERE DOING...I GET THE GENERAL DRIFT.

HEH HEH...YOU CAN BE HONEST.

CHIKA...

MY WIFE... WHAT DO YOU THINK OF HER?

I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT WHEN MARIKA AND SHINOHARA DESCRIBED HER...

WELL, TO BE HONEST...

YOU THINK SHE'S A TERRIBLE MOTHER.

I THINK IN SOME WAYS, SHE TAKES IT OUT ON OUR DAUGHTER.

THANKS TO THE FAMILY'S TRADITIONS AND HER WEAK CONSTI-TUTION, CHIKA HAS SUFFERED JUST LIKE MARIKA.

WHY IS SHE LIKE THAT?!

I JUST DON'T GET IT!

I KNOW YOU CARE ABOUT MARIKA'S WELL-BEING...

YOU'RE RIGHT.

IT'S SELFISH.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT HER MOTHER'S BEEN THROUGH, BUT STILL!

IT ISN'T TACHI-BANA'S FAULT!

BUT THAT MAKES NO SENSE!

BUT THEY FOUND HER AND BROUGHT HER BACK.

SHE RAN AWAY TO ATTEND A HIGH SCHOOL OF HER CHOOSING.

BUT ONCE UPON A TIME, SHE WAS JUST LIKE MARIKA. THERE WAS A TIME WHEN SHE REBELLED AGAINST THE TRADITIONS AND RULES OF THIS HOUSEHOLD.

IT'S COMPLI-CATED.

...THOSE RULES AND TRADITIONS?

WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT TO HONOR...

WHAT GIVES OUR GENERATION THE RIGHT TO CHANGE THAT?

THIS FAMILY'S TRADITIONS HAVE BEEN PASSED DOWN THROUGH GENERATIONS OF PEOPLE WHO SUFFERED THE SAME FATE.

PRESENT COMPANY EXCLUDED, A LOT OF PEOPLE EXPECT THAT OF MY DAUGHTER.

IT'S THE SAME.

AS THE HEIR TO THE ICHIJO LINE, I'M SURE THEY EXPECT YOU TO ASSUME LEADERSHIP ONE DAY?

I DON'T THINK ANYONE CAN GET THROUGH TO HER.

BUT TO NO AVAIL.

I TRIED FOR YEARS TO CHANGE MY WIFE'S MIND.

BUT EVEN SO...

I KNOW THE WAY SHE TREATS MARIKA IS A FAILING.

ONE COULD HARDLY CALL HER A GOOD MOTHER.

...LOVE HER.

I STILL...

EVEN SO...!

SKWEEZ

STILL...

ZZZZZZ

ZZZZZZ

YOU...!

?!

RATTLE

RATTLE

KLINK

...

Locks and keeeeys !!

Lock-smiiiiith !!

WHA ...?

ANYONE NEED...

...A DUNGEON KEEEEY?

BLART

WHAZZAT ?!

SH...

SHINO-HARA?!

WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE?!

WELL, WELL. FIGURED I'D PROLLY FIND YA DOWN HERE.

YOU MET MARIKA'S MA?

WAIT A SEC...

WHERE'D YOU COME FROM?!

LONG TIME NO SEE, SHINOHARA! HOW HAVE YOU BEEN?

LONG TIME NO SEE!

OH, HEYA!! MARIKA'S PA'S DOWN HERE TOO, HUH?

HEY...

WAIT A SEC...

HM... YOU DID MENTION THAT BEFORE ...

TEE HEE! THIS PALACE IS CHOCK-FULL OF SECRET PASSAGEWAYS!

I TOOK A SECRET ROUTE EVEN HONDA DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT AND CAME TO RESCUE Y'ALL!

YOU'RE WELCOME!

DON'T TELL ME YOU PLANNED ON US GETTING CAUGHT?!

WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL US ABOUT THAT WAY, THEN?!

HUH?

Ah...

C'MON, PA!

THERE!

NOW, NOW. I'LL EXPLAIN LATER.

FIRST, LET'S GET Y'ALL OUTTA HERE.

NAH.

I'LL LAY LOW DOWN HERE A BIT LONGER.

GAH!! SERIOUSLY ?!

WAIT... YOU CAN'T BLOW ME OFF LIKE THAT!!

WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO DO NOW THAT YOU'RE OUT?

ICHIJO...

NOW...

BUT I...I...

I'M SORRY.

I KNOW IT MIGHT CAUSE A LOT OF TROUBLE FOR YOU, SIR...

HEH...

WE GROWN-UPS HAVE TOO MUCH BAGGAGE HOLDING US BACK.

I COULDN'T CHANGE MY WIFE'S MIND.

BUT YOU YOUNG'UNS MIGHT ACTUALLY STAND A CHANCE.

YOU LOOK...

...JUST LIKE YOUR FATHER WHEN HE WAS YOUR AGE.

WE GROWN-UPS WILL DO OUR BEST TO FOLLOW UP.

DO WHAT Y'ALL GOTTA DO.

DO WHAT'S BEST FOR MARIKA.

TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK

ALL RIGHT!

THEY'RE IN DREAMLAND, THANKS TO SOME VERY POTENT MEDS. ♡

YOU'RE SCARY.

WHAT ABOUT THE GUARDS AND STUFF?

YOU DID?

FIRST, WE GOTTA MEET UP WITH THAT HOT HALFIE AND MISS BOOBALICIOUS!

THEY SHOULD BE OUT BY NOW... I SENT HELP!

SO?

WHATCHA GONNA DO WHEN YOU'RE REUNITED?

IT'S TIME!

MIS-TRESS!

WE'RE GOING TO BUST UP...

...THIS WEDDING!!

Good thing I used the wild animal cage.
It's not going to break, is it?
BA-DMP BA-DMP
GUARD
KLANG!!!
KLANG!!!
KLANG!!!
Geez, these bars are tough.

Chapter 188: To Mari

CHATTER

CHATTER

CHATTER

CHATTER
CHATTER

"DON'T MAKE ME SICK"?!

DOESN'T SHE CARE ABOUT MARIKA'S HAPPINESS...?!

AAAAAUGH !!

GRRR RRR RR!

WHAT KIND OF PARENT SAYS THINGS LIKE THAT?!

HEY ...

I ALREADY SAID ALL THAT STUFF.

I wasn't going to do anything!

SHEESH! I JUST DIDN'T WANT TO STARTLE YOU BY SAYING SOMETHING...

Like I believe that!

...SO I TOOK COUNTER-MEASURES BEFORE HE COULD EVEN STRIKE.

AFTER HE UNLOCKED OUR CELL IN THE DUNGEON, HE SLITHERED SILENTLY TOWARD US WITH A CREEPY LOOK ON HIS FACE...

BY THE WAY, HOW COME SHU'S ALL BEAT UP?

OH...

WHAT'S THE PLAN?

YOU MENTIONED STOPPING THE WEDDING...

SO?

SO FOR NOW, WE'VE JUST GOTTA GET HER OUT OF HERE.

TALKING IT OUT WITH HER MOM DIDN'T WORK.

IT'S THE ONLY WAY.

...TO BUST MARIKA OUTTA HERE BY FORCE.

I WANT...

PLEASE THINK LONG AND HARD ABOUT WHETHER YOU WANT TO BE INVOLVED.

AND IT'S DEFINITELY BREAKING THE LAW, NO MATTER HOW YOU SLICE IT.

GIVEN THE STATURE OF HER FAMILY, IT'LL BE BIG NEWS.

THE WEDDING WOULD BE CANCELED, OBVIOUSLY.

?!

WHAT ?!

FOR NOW, I WAS THINKING SHE COULD STAY WITH ME.

AFTER WE BUST HER OUT... WHAT THEN?

GIVEN MY FAMILY'S UNIQUE SITUATION... THE POLICE CAN'T JUST RAID MY HOUSE.

WE COULD AT LEAST KEEP HER SAFE FOR A WHILE.

I THINK THE GUYS WOULD BE SUPPORTIVE, AND THEY CAN KEEP A SECRET.

NOW THAT YUI'S GONE, YOU WANT TO SHACK UP WITH MARIKA?!

EXCUSE ME?!

HANG ON... HEAR ME OUT!!

Shack up?!

!

TWITCH

ALSO...

IF YOU GUYS DECIDE TO HELP, I'LL TELL EVERYONE I FORCED YOU TO DO IT.

THERE'S NOT MUCH TIME...BUT THINK IT OVER.

IT'LL STILL BE DANGEROUS.

THIS WAS MY IDEA, SO I DON'T WANT ANYONE ELSE TO GET IN TROUBLE.

SINCE I'M FROM A YAKUZA FAMILY, PEOPLE WILL BELIEVE IT.

KA

WHAM

TSUGUMI...

RIGHT.

WHAT KIND OF QUESTION IS THAT, YOU HALF-WIT?!

WHAT WAS THAT FOR?!

YEOWCH!!

SO QUIT ACTING SO COOL!!

I'M SURE KOSAKI AND THE OTHERS FEEL THE SAME!!

YOU'RE GONNA TELL PEOPLE YOU FORCED US?! WELL, ISN'T THAT BIG OF YOU!!

YANK!

WE COMMITTED TO THIS WHEN WE DECIDED TO COME!!

...

"COOL, THANKS."

I CAN JUST IMAGINE RURI'S REACTION...

I DON'T REALLY WANT TO BELIEVE IT.

I'M STILL IN SHOCK...

...ABOUT MARIKA'S MOTHER.

WE'VE COME THIS FAR... I'M NOT QUITTING!

I'M IN!

...

...THEN I GUESS IT'S REALLY TRUE.

...AND YOU COULDN'T GET THROUGH TO HER...

BUT IF YOU TALKED TO HER...

COME ON, WE'RE A GANG TOO! WE CAN HANDLE ONE LITTLE MARIKA!

THAT'S CRAZY!! YOU WANT TROUBLE WITH THE POLICE?!

YAP

YAP

YAP

YAP

LOOK, YOU CAN SETTLE THAT PART LATER...

BACK TO THIS AGAIN?!

YEAH, BUT THIS WAS MY IDEA...

YAP

THAT'S MY CONDITION!

BUT MARIKA STAYS AT MY PLACE.

WHAT?!

MY ROLE IS MERELY TO COMPLY WITH THE WISHES OF MY MISTRESS...

ANYWAY, I'M IN!

RUNNING OFF WITH THE BRIDE ON HER WEDDING DAY? WHATTA FANTASY!

WELL...

I PLANNED TO DO THIS ALL ALONG.

AND YOU, SHINO-HARA?

I ALREADY GOT YOUR OTHER PALS STATIONED INSIDE THE CASTLE! ♡

WHAT?!

YOU MEAN...

FIGURED WE'D HAFTA DO THIS TO SAVE MARIKA.

SO ACTUALLY ...

I FIGURED YOUR NEGOTIATIONS WOULD LAND Y'ALL IN THE DUNGEON.

I TOLD YA ALREADY...

I'VE KNOWN MARIKA'S MOM FOR A LONG TIME NOW.

ER...

ONODERA AND MIYAMOTO, WAS IT?

HM...

SO YOU'RE THE LAST-MINUTE HELP WE HIRED?

Y-YES... P-PLEASED TO MEET YOU!

NICE TO MEET YOU.

JUST GO WITH THE FLOW.

Y-Y-YOU SURE ABOUT THIS?

WON'T THEY SPOT US?!

WE HAVE A BUSY DAY AHEAD.

OKAY. RIGHT TO WORK, THEN.

Y-Y-YES, MA'AM!

YES, MA'AM.

YEESH...

I CAN'T BELIEVE WE'RE WAY OUT IN KYUSHU, TAKING PART IN AN ABDUCTION.

"I GOT A SPECIAL JOB FOR Y'ALL!"

SHINOHARA TEXTED. SHE RESCUED THE OTHERS FROM THE DUNGEON.

WE'RE TO PROCEED WITH THE OPERATION AS PLANNED.

OH!

I'M GLAD EVERYONE'S OKAY!

SO, NOW THAT WE'RE IN, WHAT'S OUR PLAN?

WE CAN'T DO CRAZY NINJA STUFF LIKE CHITOGE AND TSUGUMI...

OF COURSE, HERE I AM GOING ALONG WITH IT ALL...

THESE GUYS ARE ALL NUTS.

Sigh...

yeesh

HUH?! THAT'S ALL YOU'RE TELLING ME?!

COME ON!!

JUST FOLLOW MY LEAD.

DON'T WORRY. SHINOHARA FILLED ME IN.

HERE'S AN OVERVIEW OF PROJECT RESCUE MARIKA!

ALL RIGHTY!

THE KEY IS THE TIMING!

OUR GOAL IS TO REMOVE MARIKA FROM THE PREMISES!

WE'LL INTERCEPT HER HERE!

Dressing room

venue

Dressing room

THANKS TO THE COMMOTION YESTERDAY, SECURITY IS ON A HIGH LEVEL OF ALERT!

...AND FROM MARIKA'S DRESSING ROOM.

NATURALLY, WE'RE TOTALLY CUT OFF FROM THE WEDDING VENUE...

IT'S OUR ONLY CHANCE!

RIGHT BEFORE THE CEREMONY...

...WHEN THEY'RE WALKING HER IN!

GOT IT!!

LET'S GET MOVING!

THERE AIN'T MUCH TIME LEFT.

THE CEREMONY STARTS AT NOON.

MAY I HAVE A WORD?

MS. SHINO-HARA...

I'll scope the outside area!

Me too!

IS IT TRUE?

IF SO... THIS WHOLE PLAN...

AH...

HONDA TOLD YOU...

YES.

...I STILL WANT...

EVEN SO...

THEN WE WON'T TELL THE MISTRESS AND RAKU ICHIJO ABOUT THIS FOR NOW.

ALL RIGHT.

SO THAT'S HOW IT IS.

I SEE.

...

THANK YOU...

IF THAT'S WHAT IT TAKES TO SAVE MARIKA TACHIBANA...

...

IT SEEMS YOU NEED SOME SCHOOLING.

I appreciate it.

MISS BOOB-TASTIC...

WE'LL SAVE YOU, NO MATTER WHAT!!

HANG IN THERE, TACHIBANA!

MISTRESS
...

DO YOU WANT TO WEAR THIS FOR THE CEREMONY?

...

HEY, MARI!

YOU THERE?

I FOUND IT IN A SHOP IN TOWN AND BOUGHT IT FOR YOU.

WHAT'S THIS...?

HERE! FOR YOU!

WHAT?! YOU GOT THIS FOR ME?

IT'S A MARIGOLD!

I FOUND A FLOWER WITH YOUR SAME NAME!

YEAH! REMEMBER WHEN WE WERE LOOKING AT THAT FLOWER ALMANAC YESTERDAY?

I HOPE YOU GET BETTER SOON, MARI!

I BET YOU'LL BE BETTER IN NO TIME IF YOU WEAR IT!

YELLOW MARIGOLDS ARE A SYMBOL OF HEALTH!

THANK YOU, RAKU!

I'LL TREASURE IT ALWAYS!

OKAY! WAIT A SEC...

I'LL CLIP IT ON FOR YOU...

EEK! I'LL DO IT MYSELF!!

THIS...

...

Volume 21--To Mari/END

Bonus Comic!!

With Dr. Maiko defeated, peace reigned world-wide...

Magical Confectioner Kosaki!!

After the final battle, Rurin mentioned something about "settling up" and disappeared.

Several weeks passed.

KCHIK

Our enemy defeat-ed...

...we Magical Girls...

...are no longer needed, it seems.

TMP

It's as if the whole thing was just a dream.

I talk to Chitoge and Marika every now and then...

...and they seem to feel the same way I do.

What am I doing here?

We have work to do, obviously.

R... Rurin... What are you doing here...?

What's with the face?

It took me a while to seal up ol' Maiko in an inter-dimensional space.

Long time no see, Kosaki.

FLASH

Ready, set... Trans-form!!

But... We're in the middle of class... Wait a sec...

WZZ

What? Who's she talking to?

BZZ

A new monster has appeared in the next town over.

The enemy is called the Fukkuda Monster. And it's up to no good.

There's no time to lose.

The battle with evil is never over.

PSHo

oooo

N...

Wha...?

Huh...?

...my troubles aren't over yet.

Appar-ently...

Whoa!!

What the...?!

Onodera's stark nekkid?!

What's going on?!

Don't look!!

NOOOO!!

OMG

OMG

YAPPA

YAPPA

END

NEXT TIME!!

MAGICAL CHOCOLATIER HARU!!

MAYBE...OR MAYBE NOT!

NISEKOI

False Love